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# ECCLESIASTICAL MEDITATIONS

SUITABLE FOR

PRIESTS ON THE MISSION AND STUDENTS

IN

*Diocesan Seminaries.*

BY A CATHOLIC CLERGYMAN.

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"Hæc meditare; in his esto."—1 TIM., iv, 15.

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***NIHIL OBSTAT.***

***JOANNES O'HANLON, S.J.M.,***

***Censor deputatus.***

~~~~~  
***IMPRIMATUR :***

***PAULUS CARDINALIS CULLEN.***

TO  
THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, IMMACULATE,  
QUEEN  
OF  
THE CLERGY,  
MOTHER OF HOLY SOULS,  
*These Meditations*  
ON  
THE VIRTUES AND DUTIES OF ECCLESIASTICS,  
ARE  
REVERENTIALLY INSCRIBED.





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## . PREFACE.

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 IN the following Meditations the writer makes an attempt to supply, in some way, however imperfect, a want which the clergy in this country have long felt. In other countries priests have books of meditation, written in their own language, and on subjects which suit the wants and interests of the ecclesiastical profession. As there is in our Church no such book, the present Meditations were written with a view to supply in some way or other, this great deficiency.

The best books regarding the ecclesiastical as well as the Christian state have been consulted for the materials of these meditations. Besides Challoner, Crasset, Nepveu, Lohner, &c., who treat on the Christian life the writer has carefully studied those authors, Chevassu, Beuvellet, Massillon, Dubois, Coulin, *Meditations Ecclesiastiques*, the Selva, &c., who have written on the ecclesiastical state. It is their sentiments and opinions which he has endeavoured to give expression to in the following pages.

If these Meditations excite in any degree the spirit

or love of virtue—if they point out more clearly to any one the duties and perfections of the ecclesiastical life, they will amply repay all the care and labour which has been bestowed upon them for the sake of the Church of God.

*Feast of St. John the Baptist,*  
1866.


## **ECCLESIASTICAL MEDITATIONS.**

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### **ON VOCATION TO THE ECCLESIASTICAL STATE.**

**"Vos non me elegistis sed ego elegi vos."—JOHN, xv., 16.**

#### **1. *On Vocation.***



**H**IS Providence of God, which orders and disposes all things, has given to every individual a particular vocation. This particular vocation is nothing more than the act of God, designing a person for some special state, giving him the necessary aptitude and qualifications for it, and making known that designation by certain marks or signs. Whoever enters into any particular state of life should have a particular call from God for it, otherwise he will not discharge its duties nor fulfil its functions properly.

Since it is then true that special vocation is required for every state, it is therefore required for the ecclesiastical state; and if it be necessary for every form of secular life, it is even more necessary for the ecclesiastical state, because this is a supernatural, and, therefore, a higher state, because greater and more sacred interests are involved in it,

because more sanctity and eminent virtues are expected in so august a ministry, and holier obligations are required to be fulfilled.

*2. On the necessity of Ecclesiastical Vocation.*

Of the necessity of this vocation to the ecclesiastical state in the New as well as in the Ancient Law there can be no doubt. For the Old Law, it appears in the arrangements which God made with the Jewish people in reference to Aaron and his family. For the New Law, it is clearly seen from the example of our Divine Saviour, who was called and sent by God, and from the doctrine of St. Paul, who requires for every Christian priest a special call such as Aaron received.

The priesthood established in the Ancient Law, was confined to Aaron and his tribe. They alone were called by God to fulfil its functions. As the Judges who governed, as the Kings who ruled, as the Prophets who announced the will of God, were peculiarly destined for their special work, so the family of Aaron were specially chosen for the work of the ministry. Nothing can be clearer than the necessity of this vocation for the Jewish ministry, and an equally special vocation does St. Paul require for the Christian priesthood when he says "Neither doth any man take the honour to himself but he that is called by God as Aaron was."

When the Old Law was fading away, and when the Precursor came, although he was sanctified in his mother's womb, and had all the virtues and mortification of the desert, still he did not commence to preach or to baptize until he was specially called by

God. St. Luke tells us, that the word of the Lord was made to John the Son of Zachary in the desert. Our Saviour, with all his excellence and perfections, did not assume the honour or undertake the office of priest, until his heavenly Father said to Him "Thou art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech." "Christus non semetipsum clarificavit ut Pontifex fieret." St. Paul, knowing the necessity and importance of Divine vocation, always puts it forward at the beginning of his Epistles, saying that he had a vocation not from men, but from God.

This Divine vocation was always required in the Christian Church. Our Saviour chose the Apostles, not giving them a mere external call, but also an internal vocation. "You have not chosen me but I have chosen you." The Apostles transmitting the priesthood in the Church acted somewhat similarly with their successors, calling them externally, and seeing in their lives the signs and evidences of their internal vocation.

### 3. *On the marks of an Ecclesiastical Vocation.*

The ecclesiastic called to the state of the priesthood, and hereafter to labour in its duties, should have similar signs and characteristics to those which our Saviour had when he was called, and sent by his Eternal Father.

These were, in the first place, the testimony of his Father through miracles, and that of the people who received him; and, secondly, these were the testimony of his conscience, and that of his talents and abilities.



The first two are referred to the external vocation, and they are possessed when an ecclesiastic has the external call to the priesthood from his Bishop or chief pastor, and when he has in his favour at least the negative testimony of the people.

The testimony of the talents is also required, that he should possess abilities of mind, and health of body, so as to be able to discharge all the duties which his ministry requires; and also to have all the mental endowments, with all the knowledge necessary and suitable to his state, in order to be able to discharge all its functions with ability and success. If the Almighty God have not given him these qualities so necessary for his work, it is clear he has not called him to his sanctuary.

The most important mark which the ecclesiastic himself will have to consider, is the testimony of his conscience. Have I a pure motive in entering into the sanctuary? This is the first question he should put to himself. If the motive be the desire to please parents, he will be then a priest for them, and not for God. Is he anxious to lead an easy life, to occupy a respectable station in the world, to rule over the people and to meet with nothing but their respect and esteem? He comes then, not to be the guide or the servant of the flock; he assumes the office of the priesthood to indulge his passions, and not to labour for the necessities of the people. Is it a motive of avarice that impels him to the sanctuary? Were this the case, he would appropriate to himself and to his own concerns the treasures of the temple and the patrimony of the poor. God would no longer be his inheritance. He

would seek the things that are his own, and not those of Jesus Christ.

The testimony of his conscience also requires, that the ecclesiastic should have a great love for the functions of his state. Our Lord shewed this predilection very early when he went into the Temple to discourse with the doctors, and we see in the case of Samuel that he was always in the Temple hearing the voice of God and preparing for the holy office he was to fill. Has the aspirant to the ecclesiastical state manifested such a tendency from his earliest years? Perhaps he has no love for the house of God, for the functions which are there performed, or for those holy ministrations with which God is honoured and worshipped. Whenever he is obliged to be there, it may be, that he feels that he is out of his place. God certainly has not called him who has such a decided repugnance to the sanctuary.

Lastly, the testimony of his conscience requires that he be a man of good life and pure morals, and that at least for some considerable time. No longer able to obtain in her clergy the innocence of the primitive priesthood, the Church is content to receive those whose sins have been purified by the waters of penance, and whose lives full of every virtue give hope and promise for the future. If then the aspirant to the priesthood have, like his Divine Saviour, grown in grace and wisdom as he has grown in years—if in the college the virtues of his youth have been strengthened and extended by his observance of discipline and his love for God—if he have grown into what the Apostle calls the "*virum perfectum in mensuram ætatis plenitudinis Christi*"—if

the past, considered and examined on every side, inspire confidence, and give hope for the future, he may then come unto the sanctuary, but with fear and trembling; and the Almighty will take him by the hand and lead him to the summit of the mountain of God.

On the other hand, if his life have been a life of dissipation and of relapse—if, while he has advanced in years he have declined in virtue—if, in the midst of the piety and virtue of the house in which he lives he have cooled down into indifference, and have hardened his heart—if the passions and vices of his youth, as yet unsubdued, are not only repugnant to the holiness of the sanctuary but even disgrace the state of the simple layman, let him not then ascend the altar of innocence to minister among the angels, for if he do he will lay up for himself a treasure of iniquity, and draw down upon his head the terrible justice of God.

Let no one then come uncalled or unprepared. Let him not bring a wicked life or profane passions into the holy place. Let him not step into God's sanctuary to do evil in his house. Should he do so, he will dishonour in the temple the majesty of God, he will be the useless and inefficient minister of the Church if he be not the scandalous and the dishonoured one, he will be the destroyer of his people whom he is bound to save, and lastly, he will consign his own soul to everlasting perdition.

Resolve never to become a priest unless you have these signs and marks of a divine vocation, and for your guidance in this matter follow the counsel of a wise and enlightened director.

## ON THE COLLEGE RULE.

“Omnia autem honeste et secundum ordinem fiant.”—1 COR. xiv.

40.

### 1. *Necessity of Rule.*



O state or community can long exist without law and order to preserve them. Were these latter not to prevail in the community, anarchy and confusion would be the necessary consequence. Laws regulate and preserve nations, and the laws of communities are the rules which indicate and establish order.

Were there no rules in a community, or were they but imperfectly observed, the end for which it was established would never be attained, or, at least, only partially so, and the community itself would be destroyed, or would be a very different thing from that for which it was originally intended. The better the laws and the rules are observed in any community the better is the community itself, the members of it have more facility in discharging their duties, and the more perfectly and surely will the desired end be attained. Thus he, who well observes the laws of his country is a good citizen—he who observes well the gospel precepts is a good Christian—he who observes well the constitutions of religion, is a good religious; and the ecclesiastic will attain his end, and be a good student, by observing the laws of his college.

## 2. *The great value of the Rule.*

Consider, secondly, that the rules of an ecclesiastical college are not to be considered merely as natural means for the preservation of order and convenience, but that they should be also viewed as supernatural means, devised by Almighty God for the attainment of ecclesiastical perfection. All these rules come from God through his Church. They are put forward in his name. They have the mark of his authority, and sanction, and if well observed, will be the channels of grace and the instruments of perfection.

The perfection of the holy state of the priesthood is the end at which all these rules aim, and tend to. No matter how widely they seem to differ, this is their object. Every rule, no matter how unimportant it may appear, has this tendency, and has its own share in producing that ecclesiastical perfection which is the end of collegiate life.

The full and complete observance of these rules forms the perfect ecclesiastic, and the holy priest—the “homo Dei” spoken of in the Scriptures—the man who will minister worthily in the Sanctuary and who will labour well for the people. Being the will of God, these rules bring to the student who observes them, a great amount of every kind of good. They bring and give all the graces and blessings of the ecclesiastical state. Their observance will be sure to enlarge the mind and to make the heart better. All ecclesiastical knowledge and no other will come through them. They make you love the “altum silentium” that prevails in the

house of God. They train you in habits of piety and prayer, in study and recollection. Every day they teach you, that the first virtue of an ecclesiastic is the virtue of obedience, and above all, they show you how to overcome your passions and to overcome yourself.

Love and practise the observance of rule, and it will be your friend. It will keep you clear from all danger. It will help you in trouble. It will never let you into difficulty. It will elevate you from the passions of the earth to the consideration of God and it will put into your hands the greatest gifts and the multiplied blessings of Heaven.

Habitually violate the rules and you will likely become the enemy of God, and the enemy of yourself.

### 3. *Evils of its Violation.*

Consider the great evils which flow from the want of observance of these rules. The continued violation of them, wholly or in part, is always accompanied with sin. This violation is a certain departure from the will of God to consult private pleasure and convenience. It is an interruption of the flow of grace and blessing. Not only does it disturb the material order that prevails, but considered supernaturally it is a great evil, for it is an injury to the individual committing the violation as well as a scandal and disedification to all who witness it. Example is better than precept, and the bad example of violation generally draws others to imitate it.

Though a student may be otherwise excellent, and good, yet if he be irregular in the observance of rule, his spirit is not the spirit of God. He

refuses to submit to those laws and ordinances which God has established. He despises the graces which God offers him in abundance. He endeavours to draw others into the same evil in which he himself has indulged, and in the house of preparation and piety he rebels, in the pride of his heart, and obstinacy of his will, against the spirit of God which brought him into it.

Save us, O Lord, from these evils, and turn our hearts to the observance of all good, so that we may say with the Psalmist "*Iniquos odio habui et legem tuam dilexi.*"

Let us resolve to serve God faithfully in his house by making the best use of all those graces which he gives us during our college life.

## ON THE NAME OF "PRIEST."



**T**HIS word "priest" signifies or means a man whose duty it is to discharge the functions of divine worship. This is evident from the signification of the word "presbyter," from which priest is derived. This word "presbyter," when considered according to the rules of the grammarians, signifies a man who is old and already advanced in years ; but in the secondary and no less important sense, it means a man who is wise, and sensible, and prudent, who no longer either feels or exhibits the lightness or the indiscretion

of youth, who is of firm counsel, and whose judgment is matured. These were, ordinarily speaking, the persons who were engaged and employed in the public worship, and by the Fathers of the Church in the primitive times they were called "Majores;" not that in reality they were older in years, but only that they were greater and more perfect in morals, for the wise man says that there are two kinds of old age—the one reckoned by the number of years—the other esteemed by the integrity of life. Hence the words of a priest are not necessarily those of a man who is old, but of one who leads an irreproachable life. For this reason they give to them, and suppose in them the qualities of venerable and prudent persons, that they call them "Fathers," and style them "Reverend."

Examine yourselves to see if you are worthy to be reckoned among those whom the Fathers called "Majores" in the ancient Church. See whether you have the wisdom, the prudence, the judgment, the piety which will make you venerable and respected in the eyes of the people, and acceptable to them. Perhaps you are more remarkable for the levity of youth than for the gravity of morals. It may be that indiscretion is most to be found where it should least exist, and that you exhibit it every day in society; which is unbecoming the dignity, the gravity, and the piety of a priest. Instead of regulating and controlling your passions (as did the Majores of the Primitive Church), perhaps you give them an unbridled licence, so that they become a disedification to your ministry, and an oppression to your people. Should these faults exist, regret them



with all your sorrow, and resolve to amend, and to provide for their future regulation.

2. *From the word "Sacerdos."*

Consider well what this word "Sacerdos" signifies. When considered with regard to God, it signifies one who offers sacrifice. When taken with regard to the people for whom the priest labours, it means "Sacra dans," one who gives sacred things; "Sacra docens" one who teaches holy things; "Sacer dux," a sacred or holy leader of the people in all that concerns the worship they give to God, and the sanctification of their souls.

All these terms, as is plain, clearly signify and intimate that the whole duty and employment of a priest are entirely taken up with the Almighty God, and with the people. Should he devote himself to the indulgence of his pleasures or amusements, or give himself up to secular pursuits, he will travel beyond the pale of the duty which is signified by the name he bears; for it is unbecoming for one bearing the name of priest to mix himself up with worldly affairs, and to abandon the sanctuary where he has been called to labour.

The priest, therefore, should be altogether confined to the labours of his ministry. The name "priest or sacerdos" implies that. He is to labour for God by the sacrifices which he offers him, and for the people, by administering the sacraments to them, and instructing them in the Word of God. He should have intercourse with God by constant and fervent prayer, and with the people by communicating to them the lights and graces which he

has received in that intercourse. The Almighty God he honours, by rendering him the sovereign glory and worship which are his due; and the people he saves by sanctifying their souls in all the exercises of religion. Thus it is that a priest should be worthy of the name he bears.

See how little you labour for God, and for your people. Behold how devoted you are to the world, and to creatures; how given over to pleasure and amusements. All these things you renounced when you became a priest; and now by returning to them, you disgrace and make little of the name you bear. Resolve never to forget that the name of priest is your name; and never to abandon the duties of your state for anything else whatsoever.

## ON THE EXCELLENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN PRIESTHOOD.

“Lex per moysen data est; gratia et veritas per Jesum Christum facta est.”—JOHN, i, 17.

### 1. *Above the Priesthood of the Old Law.*



THE Christian priesthood is as much superior to the Jewish, as the New is to the Old Law. The Mosaic sacrifices and victims, and the efficacy to be derived from them, fall far below what we have in the New Dispensation. Speaking of these Jewish sacrifices, St. Paul says, that they were but shadows and figures of ours; that they were not agreeable to God, and

that they had no perfection, only in as much as they signified Him who is present with us. Their victims were no more than oxen, sheep, lambs, and such like animals. How different and how inferior to the adorable victim of our altars, which is nothing less than the body and blood of a God? Finally, the Jewish sacrifices had no value or efficacy of their own. Hence they were called by St. Paul, "*infirmi et egeni elementa*," not able of themselves to blot out or to efface sin; but our sacrifice of the Mass, in which Christ is priest and victim, and which derives its value and efficacy from his power, blots out for those to whom it is duly applied, the handwriting of sin that was against them.

Behold the inferiority of the Jewish priesthood and sacrifices. They offered up but mere animals, and yet God could not bear in them the least impurity or sinfulness, what then will the Almighty God expect from us, who offer up, not the animals of the earth, or the beasts of the field, but the victim of the New Law? He said to the Jewish priests, "I will be sanctified in those who approach me. Be ye holy because I am holy." He threatens them if they come in sinfulness into his Tabernacle, and he lays before them the examples and effects of his terrible justice; and we, the priests of that New Dispensation, which is so much better than the Old—we, who offer on our altars the adorable Lamb of God, the Holy of Holies, the worshipped of heaven and earth—we come into the Temple of God in dissipation and sinfulness, and sometimes fall into the greatest and most scandalous sins.

Wo to those who do not reflect on the dignity of

that ministry which they exercise—on the excellence of that priesthood the burden of which they bear! If their priesthood be in accordance with the little opinion and little esteem they have of it, God will take terrible justice upon them for their guilt.

*2. Above the Christian state.*

Man, left by Adam in the original corruption of nature, wounded and weakened by sin, is drawn out of this unhappy state by the grace of Christianity, and becomes a new creature in God. Through this grace, Christ confers many advantages on the Christian soul. It repairs all the defects which sin has caused. It destroys the reign of concupiscence. It enlightens the understanding, and strengthens the will. It enobles the soul by the spirit of sacrifice, and purifies it from all self-love, filling it and elevating it with that other and better love which leads to the enjoyment of the sovereign good. It finds man an enemy of God and a vessel of wrath, and it leaves him a child of God and an heir of Heaven.

Though this grace of Christianity is thus great and powerful, it is not, however, to be compared with that of the priesthood, for the particular grace of the priesthood selects the Christian out of the common order of grace to join him in a more perfect union with Jesus Christ, and to make him a participator in that more excellent and singular privilege of priest which Christ possessed. The excellence of the grace of the priesthood is seen from the place that priesthood holds among the members of the body of Jesus Christ. Priests are compared to the eyes of this body, because they guide others. They


are said to be the head and arms, the most noble parts of the body, for the defence and protection of the rest. In one sense they are the secondary heads of this body, because they participate in the priesthood of Christ, who is its primitive head. Priests are the medium of instructing the people. They are the instruments through which the graces of the sacraments are applied to souls. They open the door of the Church in Baptism. They heal those souls which are sick unto death in the sacrament of penance, and they nourish the faithful with the life-giving bread of the heavenly Eucharist.

See, then, how much the grace of the Christian priesthood excels that of the Jewish ministry, though that ministry was in itself honourable, and holy, and appointed by God. See how much it surpasses the state of the Christian soul, supported and ennobled by the grace of God, and learn from this, that you are to have more holiness and virtue than the Jewish priests, and, as you excel the best Christians in dignity and privilege, so, that you should surpass them in all manner of piety and devotion.



## ON PREPARATION FOR THE MINISTRY.

“Jesus ductus est in desertum a spiritu.”—MATT. iv., 1.

UR Divine Saviour, before he entered on his mission, thought it necessary to go into retirement, to submit to a long and painful fast, and to allow himself to endure the great humiliation of temptation. All this would appear almost incredible, were it not recorded in his Divine Word; and were it not explained by his great love and anxiety for us. His whole life was the practice and the manifestation of the highest virtue. In Nazareth he spent his peaceful youth, living in obedience and subjection, and growing in grace and wisdom as he grew in years. His intercourse with the world, his mingling amongst men, were no impediment to his perfection. He did not require the help of retirement, or the mortification of his senses to improve him in the ways of virtue; and yet, before he commences his mission among the people, he took care to make a worthy preparation for so important a duty, by retiring from the world into the desert; and by devoting himself there to prayer and mortification.

All this gives example and instruction to ecclesiastics who are preparing for the ministry. It shews them that their preparation must be in the seclusion and retirement of college life, and in the continual exercise of prayer and mortification there. They are to be associated with their Divine Lord in the labours

of his ministry. They are called to continue the work which he commenced, and hence they should make the same preparation which he made.

### 1. *Retirement of College Life.*

The Providence of God, which orders all things from end to end, places ecclesiastics preparing for the priesthood in the midst of the seclusion and retirement of college life. Like their Divine Saviour, preparing for his mission, they are separated from the world. This separation, in itself, is a great grace of God, to which they should not be insensible. This grace, however, is not the only one they have; for, inseparably connected with it, in the college life, are prayer, and silence, and study, and recollection. All these, joined with the seclusion in which they live, ought to contribute every day to perfection and advancement. They are brought into the College by the Spirit of God, in the same way as he led our Divine Saviour into the desert. They should, then, endeavour to follow their Saviour's example, by co-operating as he did with all those gifts and graces which the Holy Spirit of God gives so plentifully to those souls that love, and live in retirement. While in the College they should endeavour to make the best use of the graces and blessings of the state of seclusion. The voice of God must call them to the ministry, and train them in its virtues; and where will they so well hear that voice of God, as in the midst of that deep silence that pervades the College.

It is not only the seclusion of the College life which assists those who live in it—it is not only the silence that reigns therein which excites and disposes

to perfection; but also the prayer, and recollection, and good example, which are every where around. These are the things which form and generate in the minds of ecclesiastics the highest virtues of their ministry; and lead them to the observance of the greatest perfection. Ecclesiastics should have a lively faith, which will not be lessened by contact with, or use of holy things. They must have a purity which will remain stainless in the midst of that world which "is seated in sin and wickedness." They must have a charity, universal as well as sincere, and a patience bearing all things, so as to gain all. Now, if they neglect the opportunities which their retired life in the College gives them—if they throw away the gifts and blessings which God puts into their hands; they never can have those great virtues, so necessary for their ministry. They should frequently ask themselves in what light do they view these external graces of God; and do they look upon them as supernatural gifts and blessings. Should they consider them as the gifts and aids of God, given them to form and train them up in their holy ministry, they will regard the seclusion of the College as a benefit, and not as a burden. The time spent there will not be considered long, but very short. They will be more eager to observe the restraints of the College, than to violate them; and on all occasions they will be ready to use, and not to pervert the gifts of God.

In what light do we consider these graces? How do we act with regard to them?

## 2. *Prayer and Mortification.*

Our Divine Saviour, having retired from the world




into the desert, endured a long and rigorous fast for forty days, during which time he gave himself up to incessant prayer. He did not require to mortify the passions of the flesh; for it was never sinful. He had no need to restrain the appetites of his lower nature, for they were in harmony with his reason. He fasted only to suffer; he prayed to recommend to his Father the great work he was about to commence; and he did both, to give all ecclesiastics both example and instruction. There is a great obligation imposed on all ecclesiastics of following this example, because, unlike their Divine Saviour, their passions are not always subject to the law of their mind. Hence they should not only mortify their senses, but also be continually engaged in earnest and fervent prayer. For an ecclesiastic preparing for the ministry, these two things should be inseparable—the spirit of prayer, and the spirit of self-denial. If he have, and keep them, there is every probability that he will do a great deal of good. Without them, afterwards on the mission, he will be of no use to himself, or to any one else. He will be an idler in the vineyard, a hireling over the flock, set up for the ruin and for the destruction of many.



## ON THE ECCLESIASTICAL SPIRIT.

“Si quis spiritum Christi non habet hic non est ejus.”—Rom. viii. 9.

### 1. *In what it consists.*



HE ecclesiastical spirit is a participation in the spirit of Jesus Christ, the High Priest of the New Law, whose ministers we are. It is a virtue of the Spirit of Christ, the fulness of which is received on the day of ordination, when he makes us participators in his priesthood. This spirit inspires ecclesiastics with a love for ecclesiastical functions and duties, and requires in them the will and ability to fulfil them properly. The ecclesiastic who has this spirit has a great love for all the virtues of his holy state. His mind is filled with a great sense of religion. He labours for, and possesses angelic purity of mind and body. His whole desire is for the honour of God and the salvation of souls. He has a singular love for the Church of God, and, whenever he can do so, applies himself to study, or prayer, or labour. Every thing about him shews the man of God, and the pastor of the people. His hair, his dress, his manners, his whole exterior is regulated by what the Church prescribes, and by the practice of good edifying ecclesiastics. He is equally ready to perform all the functions of his state, whether they be high or low, honourable or of little esteem, or whether they regard the poor and lowly, or the families of the educated and the

wealthy. It is enough for him that he labours for God and wins souls to love and serve him.

To a priest animated with this spirit, whatever occurs he will weigh in the balance of the sanctuary and will turn it, if he can, to the honour of God and to the service of the people.

The ecclesiastical spirit requires in priests the ability to discharge, in a fitting manner, all the functions of their office, because if they have not the capacity to do so, it is certain that God has never called them to the ecclesiastical state, or has never given them the ecclesiastical spirit. This is the ordinary providence of God, that whatever work he calls men to perform he gives them the peculiar spirit of that work.

The people of Israel, having no flesh to eat in the desert, surrounded the tent of Moses, and filled his ear with lamentations and reproaches. For his relief, the Almighty God told him to select seventy of the Ancients of Israel who would share in his rule over the people, and he said to him, that he would take some of that peculiar spirit which he had given him, and transfer it to them, so that, thereby, they would be properly fitted for their important office. Again, when the Almighty was about to construct the tabernacle of the testimony, the men selected for that work he filled with peculiar wisdom and sagacity suitable for their great undertaking; so, also, those in the New Dispensation who are to announce and witness the great truths of the Gospel, which were typified by the tabernacle of the testimony, are specially selected and peculiarly gifted by God with all the capacity and ability which are necessary for

their duty; for if God have not conferred upon them the power to discharge well their ecclesiastical functions, it is certain that he has never given them the spirit of the ecclesiastical state.

2. *On the necessity of the Ecclesiastical Spirit.*

Without this spirit a priest, labouring in the ministry, and in charge of souls, is a useless priest—a priest who does little, if any good, and who may do much harm. If he have not the ecclesiastical spirit, it will be impossible for him to fulfil his duties in the manner which God requires in his ministers, and which the Church prescribes for them. He will have no love for the duties of his state, nay, instead of loving them, they will excite his disgust. For such a priest the whole ministry is full of pain and difficulty. It is a labour to be got through or to be avoided, and it is not, in his mind, an elevated office which God has commissioned him to fulfil on the earth, and for which he must render the strictest account before he can hope to enter heaven. The love of the duties of the priesthood always accompanies this spirit, and when the priest is not animated by it the duties of his office become painful and irksome. If he fulfil them at all, he will do so in a manner which will be without care or conscientious feeling. The instruction of the people, which to the priest having the true spirit of the Apostle is a labour of love, will be the greatest trouble to him, and he will avoid it as much as it is in his power to do so, or he will perform it in such a way that it will be of very little use or profit. The care of the sick will not give him much concern, and he will think

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one visit quite enough to reconcile the hardened sinner with his offended God. He will not love the duty of the confessional, especially hearing the confessions of children, of the poor, or of the ignorant, and the only thing that reconciles him to this important duty is that his tribunal is surrounded by persons of wealth, or education, or distinction. In a word, all the duties of the ministry are either not performed at all, or they are badly performed by a priest who has not the true ecclesiastical spirit, and who only occupies in the house of God the place of a good priest, who would serve the altar and the people with fidelity and fruit.

### 3. *Means to obtain this Ecclesiastical Spirit.*

Ecclesiastics should frequently ask the Almighty God in prayer to give them the spirit of their holy state, and to free them from the spirit of the world, which is so opposed to that of the sanctuary. Christ has said to them "You are not of this world," and, therefore, what the world esteems and loves, all good ecclesiastics should avoid and fly from. They should always endeavour to practise the advice which St. Paul gave to all ecclesiastics in the person of St. Timothy, "Be thou vigilant, labour in all things, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry. Be sober." It is by the frequent and perfect exercise of their holy functions, that they will keep up and acquire the spirit of their state.

In the annual retreat which the priest makes, he should endeavour to renew the spirit of his mind, and to wash away the stains which he contracted in his intercourse with the world, and in the labour of

his ministry. This retreat is a great gift and blessing, and should be used for the purpose of renewing or acquiring again the ecclesiastical spirit, which the priest formerly possessed, and which was impaired by worldly intercourse. Unhappy and unfortunate are those priests, who spend the precious time of the Annual Retreat unprofitably, instead of endeavouring to renew in their hearts the spirit of the ecclesiastical life, and the love of the duties of their ministry, which they require so much, and of which perhaps they have so little.

As the body is united to the head, as the branch is united to the vine, resolve to unite yourself to the High Priest Jesus Christ, and to become a partaker of his priestly spirit.

## ON THE NECESSITY OF MENTAL PRAYER.

"Domine doce nos orare."—LUC., xi, 1.

### 1. *From the nature of the Priest's office.*



N ecclesiastic who makes no meditation is without good to the Church or utility to the people. An ecclesiastic who makes his meditation every day, is the honour of God and the salvation of souls. Without meditation the priest is not a man of God, nor a man of prayer. The first of his obligations is violated, under the pretence that he has no time for it. "Nos vera

orationi et ministerio verbi instantes erimus." There is no union with God in the communication of grace, or in mutual charity. There is no praise, nor blessing, nor thanksgiving. Making no meditation, the priest neglects himself, and, what is more, neglects his people. His ministry must be barren and unprofitable. The words of the Gospel fall fruitlessly from his lips. Though he sits, as it were, in the chair of Moses teaching the people, he is not attended to, for the grace of God is not in his soul, nor the blessing of God upon his labours. His lips keep knowledge, and from his mouth flows the testament of God, but it is the inward grace which gives force and value to the word of the Gospel. He sits in the gates delivering judgment and justice upon the people, but if he make no meditation, the first to be condemned is himself. He is the sentinel upon the watch tower to see the danger afar off, and to give the alarm; but if he be without meditation, he is himself the traitor and the enemy within. When he went on the mission he was like the apostles, full of love like John, or full of zeal like Peter, but he should take care that the want of meditation would not destroy both love and zeal, and turn him into another apostle who betrayed his Divine Saviour. In a word, it is impossible for the priest to discharge his functions properly if he be not a man of prayer. Should he not receive them in prayer, where will he get the grace and knowledge, the fortitude and fear, the courage and counsel, and the other good gifts of God? Without meditation he will have the outward form, but not the inward life—he will merely do his duties

mechanically, and God, far from blessing his labours, will curse them with sterility.

## 2. *From other Causes.*

The functions of a priest are most elevated and sublime. Compared with the highest functions of the civil power, they are more eminent and superior, because the latter belong only to the natural, while the functions of a priest belong to the supernatural order. Hence the graces which he requires for the discharge of these functions are of the highest kind; and he cannot expect to have or to receive them, without asking for them in prayer. In the eye of faith, the priest is elevated above all other men; therefore is he surrounded with greater temptations to beguile him from his duty. It is, therefore, that the devil plots his ruin in particular; because, the priest being elevated above other men in dignity and power, he hopes more success from his fall than from that of many laics. The great obstacle to this is the meditation of the priest. As long as he unites himself to God in meditation, the enemy will fail in his wicked designs; but should he abandon the practice of meditation, induced thereto by the wiles and suggestions of the evil one, or prompted by the infirmity and corruption of his own nature, his fall is not far off; and sooner or later will inevitably come. He whom his meditation made a tower of strength in the house of God, and a vessel of election, becomes a dishonour and a reproach; and he whom his meditation turned into an angel of God amongst men, lifting up his heart and mind to the contemplation of heavenly things, is, when he



neglects it, subject to the lowest views, and to the basest passions of the earth.

Moreover, the priest must be all holy—sanctus, sanctus, sanctus. God requires and demands it of him. Holy in himself—holy in his ministrations and functions. He must be filled with holiness within, encompassed with it from without. How can he hope to have this required perfection if he do not meditate—if he do not learn it in meditation, where will he acquire a knowledge of his own weakness and a horror of vice; of the feebleness of man, and of the greatness, and of the glory of God?

### 3. *From comparison with Body and Mind.*

The soul is nobler than the body. The body is never left unattended; nay, did it not receive sufficient food and support, it would waste away and die; the same takes place in the soul. If it do not receive a proper and sufficient sustenance and support, it will become dead. Now, the support of the soul is through meditation, and whoever neglects this, lets his soul go to waste. Ecclesiastics, above all, are more obliged to maintain a higher and a greater spiritual life; and, therefore, are more bound to give themselves to meditation, which maintains and excites it.

Ecclesiastics, also, cultivate their minds by study and reading. Some never cease in the acquisition of knowledge; they endeavour to enlarge and to train their minds; to fill them every day with new ideas and fresh sources of knowledge, and to bring them to the highest cultivation; and is their soul to be left as a barren wilderness and waste? Is there no

fruit to be gathered by prayer in the vineyard of the soul? Will they be careless alone about that which should excite their principal care and concern? When they attend to the minutest details of profane knowledge, which is of very little value, why will they forget or neglect the knowledge of God and of his law, of his graces and of his love, that which is the highest wisdom, and the greatest perfection?

Resolve to be a good priest, and that you may succeed in your resolution, resolve to make a meditation every day.

## ON PURITY OF INTENTION IN ECCLESIASTICS.

“Vix quæritur Jesus propter Jesum.”—ST. AUG.

### 1. *Its value and necessity.*



HAT value the good intention confers on the act is well known to ecclesiastics. As the eye is to the body so the intention to the action. It is the light and guide of that course of conduct represented by the body. Now the Scripture says, that if the eye be simple the whole body will be lightsome. This good intention gives value and merit to our actions. However good they may appear to men, if a pure intention do not refer them to God, they are useless, if not sinful. There is no act, however poor and mean in appearance, that this good intention will not elevate, and even our indifferent acts will become good by it.

Labour all your life in the ministry without this good intention, and your whole life is lost. Go through the same amount of labour from a motive of vanity, or avarice, and you will have committed a sin which will be greatly punished. Give a single alms for the sake of God, and your act is good and you will have your reward.

## 2. *Our Saviour's pure intention.*

In the whole system of redemption, and consequently including his missionary life, our Saviour has given a great example to ecclesiastics of this purity of intention. The only objects which he had in view were the glory of his Eternal Father, and the salvation of mankind. The Son of man came "to seek and to save what was lost," and again he says "that the Son of man came to give his life a redemption for many." In the accomplishment of this design of redemption, he refers everything to his heavenly Father. He says "I do not seek my own glory." "*Gloriam meam non quero.*" "*Honorifico Patrem meum.*" The words of life which he spoke were not from himself. "*Verba quæ ego loquor a me ipso non loquor.*" The false prophets, who came in signs and wonders, he did not know with the knowledge of approval, because they did not do the will of his Father for whom they should have laboured. In constituting his Church, when he instructed his apostles, he put before them the relations which subsisted between him and his Father, and in his prayer to God for his disciples, he says that "he had finished the work that God gave him to do," and that he had glorified Him upon the

earth, "opus consummavi quod dedisti mihi ut faciam. Ego te clarificavi super terram. In all his ministry so constantly did he seek this glory of his Father that the apostle calls him the "gloria Dei."

Christ is our model. In our service of God, and in our labour in his ministry, have we that pure intention of which our Saviour has given us the example.

### 3. *Sins against Purity of Intention.*

Many and various are the sins committed from want of this pure intention by those who either live in college, or who on the mission serve God's altar, and labour in his house. Some without this pure motive enter into the sanctuary, attracted to it by the love of an easy and convenient life, or by the respect and dignity which surround the priestly office, or by the love of the treasures of the Temple to enrich themselves, and their connections, or by the desire to have in the Church a field and theatre for the gratification and display of their natural abilities. All such have had no true vocation, and have entered the Church, not through the door, but through the window, "sicut fur et latro." There are others who, in the beginning of their ministry, sought nothing but God's honour and interest, and afterwards seek nothing but themselves in the exercise of their functions. Let us examine our soul in these particulars.

When we instruct the people, do we preach Jesus, Christ and him crucified, or do we preach ourselves, our abilities, or our attainments? Does no human respect ever enter into the holy tribunal making


distinctions and giving preferences at the Mercy Seat of God, and neglecting the poor and lowly, who most require our care and attention? Has avarice ever incited us to the performance of our functions? "*Scrutare spiritum tuum, teipsum interroga.*" Vain glory and cupidity have laid the sanctuary waste. The *Memoriale* says, "*Celebrant sed ob stipendium, psallunt sed ob nummum, concionantur sed ob retributionem, docent set ut docti dicantur, pascant oves sed ut lac et lanam colligant.*" Why have you become a priest on God's altar? Is it for yourself, to indulge your own wishes, or to make your holy functions the instruments of your desires, or is it for the honour of God and the salvation of your people? You may have celebrated masses with great external piety. You may have preached often apparently with much success. You may have been assiduous in the confessional all day long. You may have laboured greatly among the sick and poor, but if you have not had a true and pure motive, your works are useless for yourself, and your hands are empty. The reproach in the Apocalypse applies to you: "*Non invenio opera tua plena coram Deo meo.*"

If hitherto we have had merely human views—if we were animated by cupidity or self-love—if human respect or applause blinded us, and destroyed the work of our hands, let us in future, humbled before God, do everything for, and refer everything to, his honour and glory. "*Quæritis me propter aliud, quærite me propter me.*"

## ON THE SPIRIT OF LABOUR IN ECCLESIASTICS.

“*Fac semper aliquid operis ut te diabolus inveniatur occupatum.*”—  
ST. JEROME.

### 1. *Obligation to Labour.*

F the spirit of labour should distinguish any profession, it should be that of the priesthood. If idleness should be banished from any house, certainly it should be banished from the house of God. Ecclesiastics are obliged to labour, not merely because they are children of Adam, like the rest of men—not merely because they are sinful, for sin has made all eat their bread in the sweat of their brow; not merely because they are Christians, disciples and followers of a crucified God, and therefore obliged to lead a mortified and laborious life; but, particularly, because their office and profession bind them to it. Priests are pastors of souls; they are the physicians of the sick; they are judges in the holy tribunal; they are the instructors of the ignorant; they are administrators for the community; and, finally, they are shepherds having care of the whole flock. To discharge these duties, their lives must be lives of labour.

To be assistants and coadjutors of God “*Dei coadjutores sumus*” in the great spiritual affair entrusted to them, they must be like God himself,

ever active in the salvation of souls. God calls them into his vineyard, not to sit down there in idleness, but to cultivate it. He tells them to preach his Gospel, and to instruct his people, which require great pains, and cost much exertion. If, then, they do not do so, they are idlers and wasters of that vineyard which they should cultivate; and, by their neglect they destroy—leaving them in the darkness and ignorance of error—many souls whom God has given to them to preserve, and to enlighten.

## 2. *The causes of the want of Labour.*

The great causes of this want of labour in ecclesiastics are, first, an idea that a person really becomes a priest for himself, and for his own interests, and not for the Church of God, of which he is the minister, nor for the people whom he should serve. This idea, or opinion, may have prevailed from an early period of the college course; and, never being entirely eradicated, leads to the most fatal results. With such an ecclesiastic, himself and all his affairs are put first: the Church of God and the interests of the people come last. Nay, these latter will be attended to only in such a way as to prevent the outcry of the people, or the exercise of ecclesiastical authority.

Another great cause of this want of labour in ecclesiastics is false notions concerning health, vainly imagining that they are ill, or at least thinking that they are much worse than they really are. The care, and labour, and attention of such persons are entirely given to themselves; and they consider they are provided with a lawful justification in their

imaginary illness. Much good has been lost to the Church from this cause; for, when selfishness of this kind prevails, the zeal and the spirit of a priest for labour utterly disappear.

It also happens that the manner in which some priests perform their duties, shortly leaves them very little to do. When the poor are treated without kindness or consideration, the poor very soon will give little trouble. There will be very few penitents to go to that confessional, where harshness and severity are the rule. Thus it often happens that the manner in which an ecclesiastic discharges his functions dries up the sources of his labour, and turns away the people from God's house.

But the great cause which leads to the neglect of the Church, and the people, is a love for, and a pursuit of those things which are incompatible with the ecclesiastical profession. Mingling to any extent in secular affairs, except it be for church purposes, prevents our attention to the people and our labour in the church. Avarice and passion prompt and inspire us to worldly labour; and we neglect or become insensible to the great business to which we are called, and which God has given us to do. Moreover, a love of worldly conversation and society, a great passion for amusements, and a too great indulgence in them, naturally and necessarily lead to the entire neglect of our spiritual duties.

### 3. *Remedies against Idleness.*

The great remedy against this neglect of labour, and this idleness in the house of God, is to abandon immediately and entirely all that is irreconcilable



with the duties and engagements of the priestly state. See what prevents or obstructs your labour, and endeavour to remove it, whatever it may be, or how much it may cost you.

Another means is to appoint for every hour of the day some duty which belongs to your state. Have a fixed time for your Office and Mass, for the administration of the sacraments, and for the visitation of the sick; for your studies, for your instruction, and for your recreation; and attend to this time with care and exactness. Apply yourself fervently to your duties, following the advice given to St. Timothy, "*Attende, lectioni, exhortationi et doctrinæ.*"

Are you not afraid that God will demand from you an exact account of your time and labour? Since you have become an ecclesiastic what have you done, and what do you intend to do in future? Resolve to give yourself henceforth entirely to labour for God, remembering that the wise man says that

"Idleness has taught much malice."



## ON GOOD EXAMPLE IN A PRIEST.

“ In medio pravæ et perversæ nationis lucete sicut luminaria in mundo.”



**A**FTER the priest has received his mission to the people, let it be deeply impressed on his mind that one of his first duties, and one of his primary obligations, is to give them good example. Without this his mission will not only be unprofitable but it will be injurious. Not only will it be a folly, but it will be a crime, and instead of being the resurrection, as he was constituted by the Almighty God, he will be set up for the ruin of many souls.

### 1. *Obligation and effects of Good Example.*

That a priest is obliged to give edification and good example to his people is clear enough. He is made the model, the mirror, the example, the form of the flock—"Forma facti estis gregis." Now if he be the model, he is surely the model of justice and not of iniquity. If he be the mirror, it is to reflect virtue and not sin. If he be the form and the example, it is to be an example of all goodness and not even of the shadow of crime. Christ has made priests the "sal terræ" and the "lux mundi." He has made them the salt to season, and the light to enlighten men. If they be not such, they violate the divine command, and contradict the spirit of

their vocation. This good example was always given by our Saviour for the sake of the people, for although he fulfilled the prophecies, and worked miracles, yet it was not by signs and wonders alone **that** he submitted all to the sweet yoke of the Gospel, but also by **his eminent virtues and the distinguished** example and piety of his life. This he left as a precious legacy and a perpetual precept to his priesthood. All his priests are not to work miracles, but all his priests are to give good example, for to them has he addressed these words, in the person of the Apostles, "Sic luceat lux vestra ut videant opera vestra bona, et glorificent Patrem vestrum qui in cœlis est." This good example St. Paul also insisted on, for he writes to one of his apostles: "Exemplum esto fidelium in verbo et conversatione," and to another he says:—"In omnibus teipsum prebe exemplum bonorum operum."

## *2. Evil effects of Bad Example.*

The very nature of the priest's office, and the success of his mission, require that he would be a man of good example. In every particular, if the priest be not edifying, he will not only discharge his duties without success, but he will also do positive injury to the Church and people. If he be more devoted to amusement than any member of his flock—if he be given over to secular affairs for which Almighty God never gave him any vocation, and for the neglect of which he will not be called to account on the day of judgment—if he be a man of the world, or a man of pleasure more than a man of prayer or a man of God—if his heart be seized with

avarice that is insatiable, and for the gratification of which he will take from the people, like the sons of Heli, is it not evident that such a priest in the sanctuary will do much harm and little good? We make no mention of the darker and more degrading vices which, thanks to the Almighty God, seldom occur, and which should not be so much as named amongst us as becometh the people of God; but a priest such as above described does evil in God's house, because he consults his pleasure, and gratifies his passions, to the utter neglect of his duties and cares. Seldom will he be found where he ought to be—in the Church of God. Were he required for any purpose, the last place people will go look for him is the house of God. The very sacraments themselves, which are channels of grace, and produce grace independently of his ministry, are less effective in his hands. All the graces which flow from the minister are wanting. They will not be frequented, because the people will not care to receive them from the hands of such a man.

The words of the disedifying priest have no effect. He does not often instruct or exhort the people, but whenever he does so, how can he teach the necessity of prayer when it is known that he himself practises it so little? How can he inculcate humility when he is full of pride? How can he recommend the meekness and patience of the Gospel when the people have often experienced his angry and intemperate manners? How can he enforce order and good example in the parish when he himself is one of the first and most prominent in their violation?

Then he goes about among his people, but he

does not go about to edify or to do good. His manner is of the world ; and his conversation, never on God, is full of the world. He is a censure upon virtue. The really virtuous feel a secret and instinctive dislike of him, while the tepid and disedifying are greatly pleased, because they find in his life an argument for their own sins and an apology for their own excess. In a word, such a priest is set up for the ruin of the people and the disgrace of the ministry. He not only lessens the respect of the people for the order of which he is a member, but also for the Church of which he is a minister. Religion itself is outraged and degraded in that very place where it should receive most respect and most support, and the merciful dispensation of God's grace is lessened and impeded. This is the evil fruit of the life of a priest who instead of edifying scandalizes his people.

### 3. *Good effects of Good Example.*

The priest who gives good example to his people never fails, and never ceases to do good. In the midst of the people, he is the "lucerna ardens et lucens" of which the Scripture speaks—the lamp burning and shining—burning with true charity and enlightened zeal, and shining with the edification of a virtuous life. With him, and for him, all things work together unto good. His life not only incites to virtue, but shews the way to it. The people, seeing in him some image and reflection of his Divine Master, eagerly avail themselves of his ministry. They listen to his words because they know they are dictated by charity, but his holy life is more

persuasive than his words, and this holy life is a perpetual sermon to the people. It disarms all his enemies. It censures and depresses crime. It attracts sinners. It confirms the tepid and the wavering. He is the joy and the encouragement of every good man. It makes him like as it were an Angel among the people—a light shining when all else is darkness—a model of Christian perfection in the middle of the world.


It is evident then, that the functions of a priest cannot be properly fulfilled without edification and piety. It is plain that the Church requires in her ministers, who are likened to a city seated on a high mountain, the continual light of a good example. We cannot be good priests unless we show forth in our lives the light and evidence of all virtue. Let us then endeavour to practise it in our words and works. Let us shew it in our disinterested and unblemished lives, in our love and zeal for our priestly functions, in our care and protection of those high and holy interests which God has put into our hands, and confided to our care. If we do so, we will be the true children of our heavenly Father, who has told us to let our light shine before men, and clothed in the vesture of holiness, we will be the true ministers of that High Priest Jesus Christ who was himself called the light and the Sun of justice.



## ON ZEAL FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.

“Magnificate Dominum mecum et exaltemus nomen ejus in idipsum.”—Ps. xxxiii, 4.

### 1. *Examples of this zeal.*

N the old Testament, there are two striking examples of great zeal for the glory of God. The first is Phinees, who when Israel was struck with pestilence, and when the anger of God was visible upon his people, turned away and disarmed the wrath of heaven by his remarkable zeal. On this account, God gave the priesthood to him, and to his seed for ever, not so much as a reward, though in this respect it was a great one, but still more because his great zeal for God fitted him and pointed him out for the arduous duties of the priesthood. This clearly signifies, that God looks for in his priesthood the signs and evidence of zeal for his glory.

The second example is that of Elias. A still more signal favour awaited him, because of the zeal which he manifested on behalf of God, and in favour of that law which God gave to Israel, for he was taken up to heaven before he paid the penalty of death. Elias cries out to the angel, “the children of Israel have forsaken the covenant of God—they have thrown down his altars and slain his prophets with the sword. With zeal have I been zealous for the Lord God of Hosts.” This

was the zeal that made him so beloved and rewarded by God.

Our Saviour in the New Testament gives to every ecclesiastic a great example of zeal for God's glory. During his mission he studied and sought nothing so much as the honour and glory of his heavenly Father. He is therefore styled in the Scriptures the "gloria Dei." He was always engaged in the business of his Father. Everything he referred to his honour and glory, and in the case of the profanation of the Temple, although he was the mildest of men, he assumed all the courage and boldness which the occasion required. Those who were turning his Father's house into a house of traffic, and who were thereby profaning the Temple of God, he chased away in anger, saying that it was a house of prayer, and that they would make it a den of thieves, and so much was he consumed with zeal for his Father's house, that he applied to himself the language of the Psalmist "*Zelus domus tuæ comedit me.*"

Have we the like zeal for God? Do we do and refer everything to the honour and glory of God? Are we consumed with zeal for our priestly labours and functions?

## *2. In what this zeal for God consists.*

This zeal for God consists in the manifestation of the inward charity or love. It is the smoke and flame of the divine fire which burns within. It shews itself in acts which are calculated to promote the end it has in view, which is the honour and glory of God. Hear how St. Augustine describes the man



zealous for God: "the zealous man is he who ardently desires to hinder offences against God, who when he sees any offence committed against the Divine Majesty gives himself no rest, but employs all his power to have the offence repaired; in fine, it is he who, when unable to repair the injury done to God groans deeply in his heart, and feels the greatest pain to behold the dishonour of God.

This zeal has for its immediate object the honour of God. It represses public sin, and all blasphemy outraging the honour of God. It protects the sacraments through which God's graces flow, especially the Blessed Eucharist in which God himself resides. It consults for the worship of God, and desires ardently to obtain all which befits the greatness and the glory of the Divine Majesty. It wishes to see God loved by all, and honoured by all. It desires that his kingdom may come in all hearts, "*Adveniat regnum tuum.*" It is anxious to see the light of religion shine upon all men, and the reign of God's justice to be established upon the earth.

It should be observed here, that zeal for eternal worship or for the externals of religion, though it should flow from true zeal for God, and be connected with it, is yet separable from it, because there are some who desire greatly to have magnificent temples, and to maintain all the order and dignity and pomp of the public service, and yet who in all this, do not seek God and have no true zeal for him. True zeal for God never exists without the zeal for the externals of religion, but the latter may exist without true zeal or love.

### 3. *Obligations of priests to have this zeal.*

Priests above all men, are bound to have this zeal for God's glory, because they are men of God. They are ambassadors for God upon the earth. Not only do they represent his interests, but they are in charge of them. God has left his honour and glory in their keeping. The object of their life and mission is to do honour to God, and were they to neglect it, they would be faithless to their highest obligations, and would put their souls in peril which they are bound to save. Not only are they obliged to repress everything which dishonours God and disedifies religion in the souls of others, but they should especially do so in their own, so as to have their lives and labours witnesses and monuments of zeal for God.

Have we this zeal for God? Is it seen by the people in every act of our lives? Do we ever dishonour God by our sins, by our imprudence or by our scandals? Do we forget ourselves and our own interests to remember only the honour and glory of God. This sentence of St. Augustine should be written in our hearts:

“Qui non zelat, non amat; qui non amat, manet in morte.”



## ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF TIME.

“Videte, fratres, quomodo caute ambuletis non quasi insipientes sedut sapientes redimentes tempus quoniam dies mali sunt.”—  
EPH. v, 16.

### 1. *What view we should take of Time.*



THE time of the life of man—the time in which grace and mercy flow—which is an acceptable time and a day of salvation, is like the other gifts of God, precious and valuable. This time of grace and mercy has been bought at a great price; for it is the fruit of the infinite sacrifice of the cross, and a consequence of the blood which Jesus Christ shed for all. As the Almighty God has conferred grace through the merits of his Son, so also has he given time in which men can use it. As he has bestowed great mercy, and manifold blessings upon his people, so has he given them this great gift of time, to apply these benefits to their souls.

In the use of this precious time, it should never be forgotten that it is very short. “Dies hominis breves sunt.” The longest span of human life appears very short on the bed of death. It will be as a dream which fadeth away from the mind; and, like a vapour which disappears as soon as it is beheld. What is the longest life when compared with the eternity which, if we may so speak, succeeds to it? How many are there whose life is not so long as

that of ordinary men, the term of whose existence God counts by a few years; by a few months, or even by a few days. Many an ecclesiastic looked forward to the time to come, and counted upon it as a certain thing; and God surprised him in the night-time, and called him to an account of his stewardship.

Time, besides being valuable and short, is also irrevocable. Once it is passed it never can be recalled. All that time which we make no good use of, and which passed by without profit to our souls, will never again return. It is a gift of God which he will never bestow any more. It is a treasure of grace and mercy which is beyond the reach of our hands. Unhappy is that ecclesiastic who lets his life go by without doing good for himself or for his people. He may regret and mourn over the time which is past, and "think upon the years of his life in the bitterness of his soul;" but if the Almighty God do not give him further time for penance and reconciliation, his fate is certain, and his regrets are unavailing.

## 2. *How an Ecclesiastic loses his Time.*

An ecclesiastic loses his time when he spends his days in idleness. God expects other fruit than this. He also loses his time when he allows his mind to be occupied with vain and useless ideas, with projects which will never come to anything, and with designs which appear only to be put aside.

An ecclesiastic loses his time when he does evil in God's sight. Not only is this time not employed well, but it is employed badly, when insult and

offence are given to God. If he should spend any time in detracting his neighbour, in the frequentation of dangerous or sinful society, in the reading of bad books, in any of these amusements which violate the laws of the Church, and scandalize the people, then will he have a rigorous account to make to an angry God, for that time of mercy which he could not understand, and which he spent in acts of outrage, and in a life of sin.

Even though he performed actions apparently good, the ecclesiastic loses his time when he does not perform them with a pure intention. They are vitiated from want of this purity of motive; for, "if the eye be evil, the whole body will be darksome."

Consider, also, all that time to be lost in which an ecclesiastic, as such, mingles in secular affairs, because the Almighty God never gave him any vocation for these works, and, if the priest neglect them, God, on account of that neglect, will never call him to an account on the day of judgment. These secular affairs are quite alien and foreign to the spirit of the priesthood, and to the ministry in which every good priest is wholly occupied. They turn the priest into a layman, making him forget his priesthood; and, they introduce into the sanctuary, where God alone should be thought of, the strife and the dissensions of the world.

Finally, on every occasion in which the ecclesiastic neglects his duties, he loses his time; for he thereby turns the opportunity of good into a means of offence, and consumes uselessly and sinfully that time which God has given him in mercy, and which

St. Bernard says should be used "to do penance, to obtain pardon, to acquire grace, and to deserve glory."

3. *The means of employing our time well.*

The first means of employing our time well is to confine ourselves to our own duties, which regard the interests of the sanctuary, and the spiritual good of the people. We are not to concern ourselves with the business of seculars, in which God never invited us to have any share; and, to interfere in which, will be an utter loss of that time which otherwise might be religiously employed.

Secondly, in all religious duties, whether they regard our own souls or those of the people committed to our care, there should be great purity of intention. It is from the want of this pure intention that the acts of many become sinful in God's sight. Were an ecclesiastic to labour in the house of God, not from the motive of the divine honour or the salvation of the people, but to minister to his own pride or vanity, or serve some interested or sinful passion, it is clear that he would be not only losing his time, but that he would be laying up for himself a treasure of iniquity against the day of wrath.

Finally, that he may spend his time well, and put his labours to the best advantage, an ecclesiastic should learn to do all things with order, for order is the life and soul of labour. He should have certain fixed times for his religious exercises and pastoral duties. There should be a certain hour for prayer and meditation, for the celebration of mass, and the reading of the Divine Office, for the visit to the

Blessed Sacrament, for the Rosary, for the visitation of the sick, for study, for recreation, *et cetera*. When that time comes let him fulfil exactly and punctually the required duty. Thus will the days be "full days," and will be given entirely to God.

Let us ask ourselves before our God and our conscience, how do we spend our time? Is there a single hour which we spend foolishly, uselessly for the Church, or for the people, sinfully for our own souls. Hear the words of a great moralist:

"Nunc lege, nunc ora  
 "Nunc cum fervore labora  
 "Sic erit hora brevis  
 "Sic labor ille levis."

## ON THE DAILY EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE.

"Si nos metipsos judicaremus non utique dijudicaremur."—  
 1. COR. xi, 31.

### 1. *Reasons for making this Examen.*



It will be very difficult for a priest to attain that ecclesiastical perfection which he is bound to possess if he do not make the daily examination of his conscience. To abandon it, or to neglect it, is to throw away one of the most powerful means of sanctification, and of progress in all virtues. In this examen we sit in judgment upon ourselves, and we take, as it were, our soul in our hands.

This examen exposes to view all our vices and imperfections, so that we can excite great sorrow and contrition for them. In this way the examen can and ought to be made a daily preparation for the sacrament of penance. Not only are our sins made known, in order to grieve and repent for them, but also that we may avoid them, and determine the means for so doing.

This examen discovers the failings to which we are inclined. It exhibits to us the weakness of our hearts. It will shew us whether or not we have advanced, for that day, in the love of God and in the practice of virtue. It will cut out our vices before they take deep root. It will arrest our bad inclinations as soon as they are manifested. It will prevent the formation of bad habits, and be a powerful resistance and remedy against the assaults of impurity.

Behold some of the reasons which should induce us to make this daily examination of conscience.

## 2. *The divisions of the Examen.*

There are three things which constitute the examen of conscience; first, the preparation; secondly, the discussion or examination; and, thirdly, the conclusion.

In the preparation we give thanks to the Almighty God for all the benefits and favours which he has ever conferred upon our souls, especially for the great grace of vocation to the ecclesiastical state.

We beg from the mercy of God all the knowledge and instruction which are necessary for our state,



and, above all, light to know and to avoid our sins, and to detest them with our whole hearts.

The second part consists in the discussion or examination of our life for that day. It is a review of all the actions of the day. It is a careful analysis of our sins and imperfections: seeing into what errors or vices we have fallen, what occasions we have avoided, what dangers we have shunned, what perfection animated our religious duties, and what zeal gave life to the functions of our charge.

This examen is also a test of the progress which we have made, an insight into our greater success in subduing our corrupt inclinations, and overcoming the natural evil of our hearts. Finally, through the means of this examen, our conscience is seen, as it were, in a mirror, and we have placed before our eyes the exact condition of our souls.

The conclusion, which is the third part, is occupied by acts of sorrow and contrition for having offended God—by resolutions of amendment for the future—by a firm determination to avoid all occasions, at least of greivous sin, and by voluntarily undertaking some work of penance or mortification.

### 3. *The subject of this Examen.*

The particular examen regards one particular vice or virtue. It fixes and concentrates the attention of the mind on some special subject, which, generally speaking, is the predominant passion, or some defect about the avoiding of which there is some difficulty; but the general examen, of which there is question here, regards all the actions of the

day, and inquires into all the defects of the day into which we may have fallen.

Not only are you to consider the Christian virtues, and the moral obligations of the Christian life, but you are to view these virtues in relation to the priesthood, and to reflect on these obligations in regard to your particular charge. It is not enough to see that you have lived a good Christian life, you must also see whether or not you have lived the life of a good priest. Ordinary virtue does not suffice for you, because the life of you, who are the pastor and shepherd of the people, must be something more than common. Hence, the humility which would suffice for a Christian would not be enough for a priest. The prayer which would confer grace and protection on the faithful, would not suffice for the father of the faithful and shepherd of the flock. Your general examen, then, will regard your virtues as a priest and your duties as a pastor.

You will see how you have made prayer and meditation, and what practical fruit you have derived from the latter. You will ask yourself have you said Mass with external respect and interior piety, making your preparation beforehand and your thanksgiving after. You will also see whether or not you have paid a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, whether you have made your usual devotions to the Blessed Virgin, for whom every priest should have a great love and worship.

Your duties in the Confessional, in the administration of the Sacraments, and in the care of the sick, will also be before your mind, and you can then inquire whether in their performance your

great motive was the service of God and the salvation of the faithful.

If you have lived for this day in tepidity, in your examen you will resolve to be fervent. Have you sought danger instead of avoiding it?—you will think on the Scripture saying, that “he who loves the danger will perish in it.” Have you sought society which was unbecoming the character of a priest, and the gravity and dignity of your holy ministry?—fly, then, as from a plague, all the attractions of sin, and say, with the Psalmist, “that you had rather be abject in the house of your God than to dwell in the tents of sinners.

Thus, by this daily examination of conscience, will you cleanse and purify your soul. Thus will you judge yourself, that you may not be judged by God, and when the bridegroom cometh your soul will go forth to meet him.

## ON THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

“Christ was delivered up to death for our sins, and rose again for our justification.”—ROM. 4.



**D**URING the Lent, especially during the past week, we have been, as it were, the witnesses of Our Saviour's cruel passion and shameful death ; but the scene is now brought to a close. The sad and dolorous tragedy is turned into a triumph. The great mystery unveiled, hidden from many, has received

an explanation. The miracle of all miracles has been accomplished. The testimony which Christ advanced to prove his mission and his divinity is now fulfilled; for, the Son of man who was crucified in ignominy and shame, has risen from the dead. The evil and malignant passions of men thought they won a victory when they nailed him to the cross, and consigned him to the tomb; but these things, which are the usual emblems and instruments of human destruction, only served on this occasion to display the wisdom and the power of God.

1. *Resurrection the extrinsic cause of our Faith.*

No sooner was this wonderful miracle made certain, than the faith of the apostles, which died away at the death of our Saviour, revived with his risen life. They abandoned him as soon as they saw him in the hands of the wicked multitude; and they fled from their Divine Master who told them to watch and pray lest they should enter into temptation. Humanly considered, it was difficult to believe that he whom they saw upon the cross was God; but, when to the astonishment of all, he left the grave in which he was enclosed, their faith was again enkindled, never again, through God's grace to fail away; and as it was the re-establishment of their faith, so it was the foundation and the extrinsic cause of ours; for, if Christ did not truly rise, our religion is without foundation and proof, the prophecy concerning the resurrection is unfulfilled, and the testimony which Christ advanced has not been given. St. Paul says, "if Christ did not truly rise vain is our preaching, vain, likewise, is your faith." But the fact of the

resurrection is beyond doubt; for, in the mysterious designs of God, even our Saviour's enemies have contributed to the proof; and, this resurrection being once established, it immediately shews that Christ was God, and that his religion was divine. This wonderful miracle was performed by the power of Christ our Saviour. Since Christ stated he would rise by virtue of his own power. The words in which he made this statement were surely verified before all. The Jews heard Him solemnly say, that, if they would destroy his body and take away his life, that he would re-animate his body and give it new life." "Solvite hoc templum," said he to the Jews, referring to his body, "et reedificabo illud tribus diebus." It must, consequently, have been to Christ's own power that the resurrection was due, and it, therefore, proves Christ to be God, and the religion in which we believe, to be divine.

## *2. The Resurrection the motive of our Hope.*

The resurrection of Christ is the pledge and proof of ours. Had not Christ risen our hopes would not go beyond the grave; we could have no expectation of eternal life with God. Christ, in his death and resurrection has repaired what Adam destroyed. Adam took away the life of soul and body; Christ gives life to the soul by grace; and life to the body by our future resurrection. This hope of resurrection, and of eternal union with God, is the very soul of the Christian life. It consoles us in sufferings; it sustains us in afflictions; it lifts up our mind to what is higher and holier; it reconciles us with the evils of this life, and holds up before us the rewards and

promises to come. Take away the hope in the future, given by the resurrection, and you bind all men down to the passing and petty interests of the hour. It was not so with Job, who, strong in faith and hope, cried out "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that on the last day I shall rise again, and that in my flesh I shall see my God."

### 3. *The Resurrection the model of ours.*

The most practical and important point in Christ's resurrection is that it is the model of ours. As he rose from the dead, so we, too, must rise from the state of sin to the life of grace, from tepidity to fervour, from indolence and sloth to devotion, even from justice and sanctity to higher justice and increased sanctity. This is "the newness of life" which we must have, otherwise we will not imitate our Saviour's resurrection. This is the great lesson it teaches—this is the good it does—this is the fruit it produces, to rise us from the grave of tepidity and sin, and make us walk in the sanctity and justice of a regenerated life. Christ's resurrection, which we are to imitate, had two qualities—first, it was true; secondly, it was lasting. It was a true change; for he was really dead, and he rose again to life. It was a lasting change; for he never died again. "Death had no longer dominion over him."

It is well to say that the Scripture mentions three different resurrections—the first that of Samuel; the second that of Lazarus; and the third that of Jesus Christ. Now, the resurrection of Samuel was not a true one; for he did not truly rise in the body; it was his spirit which spoke to Saul. The resurrection

of Lazarus was true, but not lasting, because he died again in the course of time; but the resurrection of Jesus Christ was both true and lasting—true, because he really rose from death to life; and lasting, because he never returned to the grave of death, whence he issued.

Now, we are not to imitate the resurrection of Samuel, which was only apparent, nor that of Lazarus, which was not lasting; but our spiritual resurrection is to be like that of Jesus Christ, and, therefore, is to involve a true change of heart and life, which is not to be a passing thing, but to be practically permanent in our lives.

There are many who go through the exercises of this holy time with great apparent piety. They fast from food, but they do not fast from sin. They abstain at their meals, but they do not abstain from tepidity and indifference. They fulfil the exercises of the holy week with seeming devotion, and receive the sacraments of the Church on this great solemnity; but still there is no change of heart or life; they rise only in appearance. Their resurrection is like Samuel's—an apparent resurrection. Outwardly they have risen, inwardly they are dead. "*Nomen habes quod vives sed mortuus es.*"

There are also many, who, at this holy time, truly rise from the sins to which they were attached, and who have overcome the passions which enslaved them, whose spiritual life is a true resurrection; but still bear about them the traces of that death from which he has risen; they live in the commission of venial sin. Instead of a hatred, they have an affection for it; they have no guard over their senses,

and they relax in the mortification of their passions; they do not avoid every occasion of sin; and, what is more, they do not fear it. Their resurrection is like that of Lazarus, who, although he truly rose from the dead, still came surrounded with the bands and clogs of that death to which he returned; their rise is similar. Hardly have they tasted of the gift of God, and of the plenty of God's house; no sooner have they drank of the torrent of pleasure, which inebriates them, than they return to the husks of swine which they abandoned, and rebel against the Father who was so good. This ingratitude, so criminal, brings back the wicked spirit and his companions, and the last state is worse than the first.

Finally, there are those who rise with Jesus Christ from the grave of a tepid and sinful life, never again to submit to the yoke and tyranny of sin; let our resurrection be like theirs. Have we been hitherto in sin? Let us now crucify the old man of sin, with his lusts and concupiscences. Has tepidity destroyed our life, or damped our energies? Let us recollect the sentence pronounced by God against the tepid man. Have we led an idle or careless, or indifferent life? Let us think of what God did with the man to whom he gave the two talents which were left unprofitable. He took them away and gave them to one who would make them produce fruit. So it is with us, if we do not use well the great advantages and favours which we enjoy here, God will take them from us, and give them to those whose lives are a fulfilment of his inspirations, and a conformity to his will.

This, then, is the way to rise with Jesus Christ, to



burst the bonds of sin, to shake off the lethargy in which we have lived, to devote ourselves earnestly and sincerely to our duties; not to let a day nor an hour pass in which we will not endeavour to improve ourselves, so as to fulfil worthily the great ministry to which we aspire, and bear well the dreadful burden that will be laid upon us. Subduing our former passions, and putting away the remembrance of our sinful lives, let us devote ourselves wholly to the sanctuary, and live entirely for God. This will be putting away the old leaven, "that we may become a new paste, as we are unleavened, because Christ, our pasch, is immolated for us."

## ON ZEAL FOR SOULS.

"Optabam enim ego ipse anathema esse a Christo pro fratribus meis."—ROM. 9. iii.

### 1. *Example of our Saviour.*



JESUS CHRIST is our model. As a priest he is the model for ecclesiastics. Now the heart of Jesus was inflamed with the most tender charity, and his life was the manifestation of the most ardent zeal for souls. His zeal is thus described in the words of a great writer: "The love with which his divine heart burned was a most tender love, which caused him to run ardently after the strayed sheep; a father's love,

which made him receive the poor prodigal with an indescribable joy; an indefatigable love, which made him forget hunger and thirst, and all his wants, to instruct and to save the sinner of Samaria; a generous love, which drew tears from him for the fate of the unhappy Jerusalem; finally, an inexhaustible love, which, wishing to shew itself in some striking way, made him sigh for the baptism of blood in which his whole body should be baptised on the cross." Behold the zeal of our Saviour. Do our love and zeal for souls resemble it in any manner?

*2. Other considerations to excite zeal for souls.*

The office of a priest is to be a salvator animarum, a piscator hominum. That is the commission which our Saviour gave him when he made him a priest and put him in charge over his people. The priest is to offer sacrifice, to administer the sacraments, to instruct the people in the Christian doctrine, to keep them away from all sin, and to win them from it by precept and example, to have his whole care and attention fixed on his flock and their spiritual wants. This is the duty which Christ pointed out for him, and gave him to do. He has no other, and on the day of judgment he will not be called to account for the neglect of any other. The priest has not been appointed by Christ in the Church a priest only for himself. His sacred character was not given to him to attend to secular affairs. Christ never put him in the Church to grow rich, or to serve his relations. The spirit of God never led him into the sanctuary to be a man of pleasure or a man of

society. It is not the world which he is to love, or its amusements that he is to follow, but he serves in the sanctuary for the honour of God and the salvation of souls. His whole business is the people. To attend to their spiritual wants, and to these alone, is his office, his duty, his profession, his obligation.

Consider well how it will be with a priest who has no zeal for his people. He is either employed in business which does not pertain to his office, or he is altogether idle. In the midst of the vineyard which requires so much cultivation, should he abandon all labour and bury the talents God has given him, leaving them unproductive, he becomes the worst member of that community of which he should be the best; for "idleness," the wise man says, "teaches much malice," and is the fruitful parent of vice. He becomes the man of sin in the house of God, and instead of serving he destroys the souls which he is bound to save. He is a crime, a disedification, an injury to himself and to every one else, an odour of death when he should be the father and saviour of the people.

If he be engaged in business which has no connection with his priestly office, which prevents the discharge of his duties, and which Almighty God never asked him to perform, how will he account for it on the day of judgment? Were he to give up his time to profane reading or study, this would interfere with, and prevent the necessary functions of his office, and would be very often useless and dangerous, if not sinful. Should he pass his days, which God expects would be "full days," in paying visits, or in receiving them, without any spiritual

motive or hope of utility, he is spending the time for which he shall account in a way which, to say the least of it, very often produces the most evil and the most lamentable results. Were worldly society, or amusements, or festivities, the rule and occupation of his life, then, instead of being a good example of Christian life and sobriety, he is but the example of sensual living, which borders closely on prodigality, and which is frequently the occasion and the source of the most scandalous sins. A priest so engaged either had no vocation or lost the one he had. Without zeal for his people he is without charity for God, and in that state he is a withered and separated branch of the vine, which is Christ.

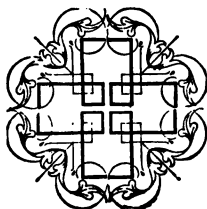
Have we these works of zeal to shew to God who is our judge? Have we gained souls that were perishing around us? Have we acquired the good will and esteem of the people by our disinterested zeal and labour?

### *3. Exercise for this zeal.*

The priest who has this zeal has a wide field for its exercise. The people can never be too well instructed. Many of them are very ignorant, entirely unacquainted with the full Christian doctrine, and some scarcely know the essentials of religion. Here it is that the zealous priest listens to the advice of the Apostle, and follows it—"Prædica verbum: insta opportune importune." The zeal of the priest also appears in the administration of the sacraments, particularly in that of penance, because it is there that he most instructs and enlightens

souls. His patience, there, bears with the ignorance of the sinner, and removes it, and, earnest in purpose, and enlightened in conscience, he there dispenses the favour and mercy of God. Should any, long habituated to sin, and hard of heart, stay away and absent themselves from these holy sacraments, the zealous priest, like our Lord in search of the lost sheep, will seek them out, to invite them to their duty, and to win them over to it by kindness and charity. He will go about among his people with the staff of wisdom and the rod of reproof; the former to assist and to heal the poor and the weak, the ignorant and the fallen; the latter to drive away all sin and scandal; lifting up his voice against them, and also to punish and to reprove all those who commit iniquity in the house of God, so that he may be a terror to every evil doer and for the praise of the good.

Thus, amidst the pains and conflicts inseparable from his office, amidst the labours and sacrifices dictated by his zeal and flowing from it, he can say to the people, whom he loves and for whom he labours: "I die daily through your glory, my brethren"—"*Quotidie morior per vestram gloriam fratres.*"



## ON CLERICAL MODESTY.

“ Sic decet omnino clericos vitam, moresque suos componere ut habitu, gestu, incessu, sermone aliisque omnibus rebus nihil nisi grave, moderatum ac religione plenum præ se ferant.”—  
CONC. TRID., Sess. xii. Cap. 1.

### 1. *In what this modesty consists.*



THE modesty spoken of by the Council of Trent springs from piety within, and regards the whole outward man. It is not the composed correct air of the Pharisee, but it is the proper disposition, and regulation of the external which is the sign and reflection of internal virtue. The Council, not satisfied with a general exhortation to this clerical modesty, enumerates in particular the things in which it should appear. The first is dress, “habitu.” All clerics should have their dress so regulated, that nothing indecent, or vain, or worldly, or superfluous should appear. These things would only excite the contempt, or ridicule of the world, and not the piety or the edification of the people. The dress of the priest should become the gravity of his profession, and bespeak it; and since they cannot wear that holy soutane with which the Church clothes her ministers, they should endeavour to wear the dress always worn by good and holy priests, and which wherever they go will distinguish them as ecclesiastics from all other persons.

Secondly, “in gestu.” All our gestures should be

moderate. Our looks, particularly, should be subdued and restrained so that they would not have the appearance of idle curiosity, or boldness, or effrontery; and should be kept modestly cast down above all in the house of God.

Thirdly, in "incessu." Our gait and manner of walking on the public roads, in the streets, and in all places where people assemble, should point out the pastor of the Church and the father of the people.

Fourthly, "in sermone et omnibus aliis rebus." Our words and conversation, never loud nor boisterous, nor domineering, should, by their subdued tone and manner, reflect and convey to all the subdued and regulated feelings of your mind. In a word, everything breathing the spirit of religion, and full of the gravity of the priestly state, should reflect the meekness, and the modesty of Jesus Christ, whose commission every priest holds, and whose example he follows among the people.

##### 5. *Obligation on priests to practise this Virtue.*

All Christians are obliged to have this virtue, for St. Paul writes to the Colossians—"Induite sicut electi Dei modestiam" but it should be practised in particular by the priest, because it makes him agreeable in the sight of God, and venerable and respected in the eyes of the people. It conduces greatly to recollection of mind, to the subjugation and mortification of the passions, and to the acquisition of all the virtues which belong to our state. This modesty is also necessary for the proper discharge of the priestly office, as the priest who has

not this virtue will offend the people, will disgust them with his ministry, and will alienate them from their duties, but it is particularly necessary for the priest, who ascends the altar of innocence, and who lifts up his hands in sacrifice between God and the people, that he should be adorned with this virtue of modesty, for it is then especially that he is made "a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men."

### 3. *Means of acquiring this Virtue.*

The great means to acquire, and to practise this virtue, is the exercise of the presence of God, for were we truly to believe that God is near us, and looking at us, all our external conduct would be well regulated, and would flow from a virtuous motive. Hence, St. Paul, when he gave the precept of modesty "*Modestia vestra nota sit omnibus hominibus,*" adds a reason for its observance, "*Dominus enim prope est;*" that God was near us, to behold our conduct, and to make us give an account of our modesty on the day of judgment. St. Bernard declares, that the presence of our good angel is a great incitement to modesty, and says that it is unworthy of us to do before him, what we would not do in the sight of men. In the presence of God and of his angels, and of his people, no ecclesiastic should sink the priest in the worldling, and instead of shewing in all his conduct the gravity and modesty of his holy profession, should exhibit the lightness and indecency of profane manners. Were he to violate clerical modesty in this way, the words of the Psalmist refer to him "God is not before his eyes; his ways are strained at all times."



Let us imitate the example of our Divine Saviour, who had this perfection in such a degree that St. Paul entreated the Corinthians "by the modesty of Christ."

Let us behold the picture which St. Bernard gives of the holy modesty of an Irish ecclesiastic (St. Malachy) in the times of sanctity, and let us see do we resemble it in any way.

At vero in Malachia quis unquam etiamsi curiosius observavitprehendit otiosum non dico verbum sed nutum? Quis manum pedemve moventem frustra? Imo quid non ædificans in ejus incessu, aspectu, habitu, vultu. Denique vultus hilaritatem nec fuscavit mœror, nec levigavit risus. Totum in eo disciplinatum, totum insigne virtutis perfectionis forma; per omnia serius sed non austerus. Remissus interdum, dissolutus nunquam.

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## ON AVARICE.

"Videte et cavete ab omni avaritia."—Luc. xii, 16.

### 1. *On the prevalence of this Vice.*



It is useless to deny that the spirit of avarice has affected, in some degree at least, the Church of God in every age. It was not confined to the priesthood of any particular place. It was not peculiar to any national church. No age appears to have escaped from the contagion. In the very beginning of Christianity itself, it found its first and most striking

victim among the companions of our Blessed Saviour, one of whom betrayed him for the love of money. This spirit of avarice which has created so much disorder in the Church of God, and which has destroyed so many priests, who otherwise would have been elevated in the choir of heaven, comes under specious guise, and plausible appearances, and therefore affects and brings many souls to ruin.

It pretends that it must have a sufficiency whereon to live, which sufficiency is in reality a superfluity, wrung from the poverty of the poor. It is anxious to make a wise and prudent provision for the future, and yet there is no priest, no matter how bereft of worldly substance, abandoned or unprovided for by the generosity of a pious people, in this exhibiting the exertion of Divine Providence, which even takes care of the birds of the air, and of the beasts of the field. This spirit of avarice puts aside much worldly substance under the cover of religion, saying and even thinking that at the last moment it will be all devoted to the poor of God, or for the purposes of charity; and yet it is well known, that in many instances it never reaches any such destination. Coming in this manner, it is not wonderful that it has affected many souls, not to speak of those, who entered into the ministry with sordid views, who saw nothing in the Church but a means of enriching themselves, and who made the most holy things—the sacrifice and the sacraments of God, the channels and the instruments of this detestable vice.

Let us have a holy fear of being among the number of those who are seized upon by this dreadful passion.

## 2. *Evils of Avarice in the ministry.*

It renders the ministry of Jesus Christ contemptible, because laics see in all the ministrations of sordid priests that they never forget the promptings of avarice. This vice of avaricious desire, they behold and detect in all that they do. In this way, the avarice of some, always scandalizes, and often oppresses the people. Let the priest be ever so good, let him be ever so exact in the performance of his duties, let his labours and works be multiplied exceedingly, and if avarice appear, it will poison and destroy them all. Let his ministry be ever so perfect and avarice will degrade it. The avaricious priest can produce no real fruits, for he destroys his own soul, and contributes in no small degree to destroy the souls of his people. It is not for souls he is looking, for his mind is not sufficiently elevated for that, but for temporal gain. He is not the shepherd to save, but he is the wolf to ravage and destroy the flock. "*De lana ovium et non de salute solliciti.*"

Besides, the success of avarice turns the priest away from his duty to other things, which are sometimes indifferent, and sometimes pernicious. It gives his mind a bent and turn which are quite foreign to the spirit of his ministry, and in the sanctuary of God, where he above all should worship the truth, it makes him bow down to idols. "*Avaritia est idolorum servitus.*"

Let us examine ourselves to see if we be free from these evils. Are we sincerely detached from the goods of this world? Does this poison of avarice

come into our ministry, to neutralize all our labours, if not to destroy them?

Behold described in the words of the Memoriale the fatal results of this wicked passion in those who become its victims.

“Numera oves tuas, numera nummos; quid pro his et quid non pro istis fecisti?

Nonne parvuli petebant panem et non fregisti dum possessionibus tuis jam fertilissimis pinguedinem prodigo labore addebas et census tuos cum omni diligentia multiplicabas.

Nonne animæ infirmabantur et non aspexisti dum pecora tua cum omni attentione foveri curabas?

Nonne lupus devorabat oves meas et tu non latrasti, dum diu noctuque vigilabas ut non sineres a fure perfodi domum tuam?

Nonne templum meum in paupertate sorduit, dum domus tua auro redundabat?

Nonne mensa mea deserta fuit, dum tua negotiatoribus circumdabatur?

Nonne pauperes mei præ egestate defecerunt, dum arcæ tuæ nummis replebantur?

Quid cogitas? quid meditaris? nonne astutias ad vendendum et acquirendum, et non industrias ad salvandum et sanctificandam?

Nonne a populo tuo non pietatem, nec sacras virtutes exposcis, sed debita cum imperiis extorques?

Nonne diviti parcis in tribunali, et cathedra, ne fontem hujus uberem tibi claudas?

Nonne tibi ipsi durus es victum et vestitum decentem tibi recusans, non humilitatis et mortificationis amore, sed turpissimæ cupiditatis ardore?

Moxieris fili et non vives. Aurum avaritiæ tuæ

æruginaturn relinques, et clamabit contra te in novissimo die.

Pretium sacrilegiorum, sanguis viduarum et orphanorum, vita pauperum te in conspectu meo accusabit: audies et irasceris; desiderium tuum insanum peribit."

Forsan castus es, sobrius es, doctus es, humilis es, pius es, et in illusionem tuam te credi sanctum; verum avarus es, et peribis; morieris cum divite et cum illo in inferno sepelieris."

### 3. *Fatal example of Judas.*

Finally, for our warning and instruction, let us not confine our consideration to the example of the avaricious priest adduced by the Memoriale, but let us also behold in the person of Judas the evil and disastrous results of this dreadful vice.

Judas was a priest, and an apostle. He got extraordinary graces from God. He went about in signs and wonders casting out devils in the name of Christ. His external manners and comportment were such as to justify the confidence reposed in him. He was a light and pillar of the Church of God. He was a companion of our Blessed Saviour. Every day he heard fall from his lips the sentiments of heavenly wisdom, but avarice seized upon his soul, and the priest who was good, and the apostle who was chosen, commits the greatest and the blackest of crimes, not only by betraying his Divine Master, but moreover by delivering him into the hands of his enemies. He who was called to glorify Jesus Christ is the first to sell his blood. He who was a defender of the Church, a tower of strength in the

house of God, becomes through avarice what St. John called him, a thief and a robber. Great God! how does this dreadful vice close up the avenues of grace and harden even the best of hearts.

Are there no Judases now, to barter and sell away the blood of the just and the holy one? Are there no money changers now in the temple, to be expelled not by words, but by force? Was the sin of avarice committed by Judas in the Sanctuary the only one of that kind for which Our Saviour wept and was sorrowful? Is there no one now who sells the blood of the innocent Lamb of God, not indeed as Judas did, by betraying him to the priests and ancients of the Law, and to the vile rabble, but what is still worse, by delivering him over to the demon, his bitterest enemy. Great and good God, let all who serve thy altar, and who labour in thy house, be saved from such a crime, and if any should unfortunately fall into the awful guilt of Judas let him not fall into his dreadful despair.

There is indeed something peculiar about this sin of avarice in the way of repentance, as this example of Judas illustrates and signifies. Others sinned much, and received pardon, having repented of their crimes. Judas made no effectual repentance. Magdalene the impure, Zacheus the usurer, the tax-gatherer and the publican, even the thief upon the cross, all received their pardon; but the avarice of Judas hardened his heart, and threw him into despair—a despair like that which made Cain a wanderer on the face of the earth—a despair similar to that which made the dying Antiochus shed tears, when his tears received no mercy—a despair that not only

ensured his own eternal condemnation, but even made him in this life his own judge and executioner.


Behold a priest who was good, and an apostle who was chosen. One word writes his whole history. Avarice drew him from the height of heaven and plunged him in the lowest hell.

As we cannot understand the inscrutable ways of Divine Providence, let us prostrate ourselves in fear before the dreadful judgments of God, and let us work out our salvation in fear and trembling.

## ON THE CONVERSATION OF ECCLESIASTICS.

“In omni conversatione sanoti sitis.”—ST. PATR.

### 1. *Its value and importance.*

T is of the greatest importance, that ecclesiastics should enjoy, either amongst themselves, or with seculars, all the benefits of a good and holy conversation. This kind of conversation produces the most excellent results, because it edifies, it instructs, it elevates, it refines and it interests all who hear it. Moreover it promotes mutual friendship, which is the end of all conversation. There is no end to the goodness which good words produce, especially when set off by excellent example.

On the other hand bad or indifferent conversation, when joined in, or indulged in, by ecclesiastics, leads immediately to sin, if it be not actually sinful.

It is the fruitful source of disedification. It is the odour of death. What is a trifle in the mouth of a secular, becomes a crime in the mouth of the priest, whose lips keep wisdom and who instructs many unto justice. St. Bernard cries out "Inter sæculares nugæ, nugæ sunt. Interdum tamen si incidant ferendæ fortassis, referendæ nunquam. Consecrasti os tuum Evangelio talibus jam aperire illicitum assuescere sacrilegium est. Verbum scurrile quod faceti urbanive nomine colorant non sufficit peregrinari ab ore procul et ab aure relegandum; fæde ad chachinos moveris, fædius moves."

## 2. *The qualities of good Conversation.*

The first quality which the conversation of ecclesiastics should have in order to be good, is that it should be carried on in all mildness and courtesy. No rudeness, nor haughtiness—no violence nor anger—no loud talking nor boisterous manners—no incivility nor discourtesy; but there should pervade all our conversation a cheerfulness, tempered with the gravity and seriousness which become our state.

Our conversation also should suit the people to whom we speak. We must address those who live in religion in a different way from that in which we speak to those who lead an ordinary Christian life. Our language to the educated and to the ignorant must necessarily vary. The manner in which we address those in high station should differ from that in which we speak to the poor and the lowly.

Finally, conversation to be good should be useful, which means that the subject of it should turn on something profitable to the Church or people. The



spiritual affairs of the parish will always furnish abundance of matter for conversation. The state of religion in the parish, the advancement of free Christian education, the care of the sick and poor, the zeal of the people or the falling away as the case may be, the ornamentation and decoration of altars and churches, the wide field of moral theology, all those give abundant sources of conversation to the good priest. No priest should be continually talking about himself, or his own affairs, or the business of other people, nor should he make himself the ordinary vehicle of every vile rumour or slanderous imputation.

### 3. *The example of Our Lord.*

Fortunately, we have a striking and useful teacher in the matter of conversation in the person of our Divine Saviour. His words breathed the very spirit of mildness. When the Apostles would put away the little ones of Christ, he said to them "suffer the little ones to come unto me." Though the Samaritan woman at the well stood convicted of sin, still he answered in all mildness and courtesy the difficulties she proposed, when she learned that he was a prophet. His mildness was so great that it was said of him that "the bruised reed he would not break, nor the smoking flax he would not extinguish." Neither did he contend nor cry out "nor was his voice heard in the streets." On every occasion he kindly received the poor, and the sinner, eating and conversing with them. His words gave hope to the miserable, comfort to the afflicted, and spread benediction on every side as he went along.

He also suited his conversation to the circumstances; for he accommodated himself to the ignorance of the Apostles, selecting the most favorable moments for their instruction, when he would be likely to make an impression on their minds; and, as regards the utility of his conversation, there was no word he spoke, as there was no work he performed, which was not in some way useful and profitable.

Is this our manner of conversation? Have we this mildness, these words full of grace and kindness? Are we prudent in our words? Do we know where and how to keep silent? Can we give a good turn to the conversation which we join? Can we refine and elevate it?

Resolve in future to take Jesus Christ for your model, and to remember the advice which St. Peter gives you: "*Si quis loquitur quasi sermones Dei.*"

## ON HUMILITY.

"*Discite a me quia mitis sum et humilis corde.*"

### 1. *What Humility is.*



THE Christian virtue of humility regards two things, the understanding, and the will. The humility of both is necessary. That of the understanding consists in knowing and confessing that we are nothing of ourselves, and that whatever we possess, be it in nature or grace, we owe to the mercy and bounty of God. By this we see and acknowledge our weakness, our

insufficiency, our indigence, and our misery. Far from thinking ourselves to have any good, this humility of the understanding makes us believe that we are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. "If any man," says the Apostle, "seem to himself to be something whereas he is nothing he deceiveth himself."

The humility of the understanding does not suffice, unless it be joined by the humility of the will. This rests upon the former. It is founded upon the knowledge of our unworthiness, and insufficiency, and consists in sincere self-contempt, and in wishing to be accounted as nothing, because we are convinced it is what we deserve. It is to this humility of the will that the author of the Imitation exhorts us, when he says "*Ama nesciri et pro nihilo reputari.*" Love to be unknown and to be accounted as nothing.

## *2. The necessity of Humility.*

There is no virtue, the necessity of which for the Christian life is more clearly laid down in the Scriptures than the virtue of humility. Hence, without further reasoning, it may be said that its exercise is especially incumbent on all priests, who should excel in every virtue, and who should be the form of perfection. But the necessity of this virtue in priests is particularly seen from the nature of their office and functions.

If humility does not reside in the heart of the priest, he will not submit to, nor obey, as the Church requires, those who have charge over him. He cannot bear the yoke of authority, even when it is exercised with the greatest prudence and discretion,

and he will take every opportunity to ridicule and to deride the power which rules over him, if he do not actually resist it.

Moreover, the proper discharge of the duties of his ministry, is impossible to a proud priest. These duties, so excellent and dignified, will often bring him into contact with what is poor and disgusting. It is only the humble priest who will discharge these duties, for were he filled with pride, he will not go into the houses of wretchedness and misery to visit and console the sick as frequently as his obligations impose. In the holy Tribunal, pride will distinguish between penitents, and upon the poor and ignorant, and those who most require the patience and zeal of the humble priest, there will be no time spent, except perhaps to offend or to discard them. Instead of preaching from the altar Christ and him crucified, the proud and vain priest will preach himself, because his language and manner tend to exhibit, and to impress on others, his own abilities, and not to persuade or exhort the practice of virtue.

In his intercourse with the people, especially with the poor, he will not visit them to give counsel or consolation in their doubts and distress, and were he obliged to do so, he will make use of the administration of the sacraments, and the authority of the priestly office, to rule and domineer over them, and he will not govern them by being the humble minister, and the zealous servant of the flock, never taking the Apostle's advice "*omnem mansuetudinem ostendentes ad omnem hominem.*" The old who are uninstructed are left by him to die in their ignorance; and, unlike his Divine Master, he will not suffer the

children to come unto him although such be of the Kingdom of God. What the Pharisee was in the Old Law, he is something like it in the New, a picture and representation of arrogance, and self-sufficiency, and priestly pride.

We should ask ourselves has this pride any place in our hearts, and do we allow it to fill our minds and to destroy our functions.

### 3. *The practice of Humility.*

Since humility is required for the efficient discharge of the duties of the ministry, how will we undertake these duties if we have not this virtue, or how will we continue to fulfil our functions without endeavouring to acquire it? Were we to continue the duties of our office while the spirit of pride fills our hearts, and directs our conduct, it is very certain that our mission could do little good, nay that it would be pernicious and sinful. Should this vice of pride be left uneradicated and unremoved by those who live in college, where there is so little to excite it, they should not vainly imagine that they will free themselves from it on the mission, where many things tend to inflame this fatal passion; for the influence possessed by the clergy, the power which they have, the knowledge which they possess, the respect generally paid to them, all tend, if they be not on their guard, to excite self-esteem, and to foster the natural pride that is within them. When it is not our daily exercise and practice in the college, in our relations with one another, and in our submission to the laws and ordinances of the house in which we live, we will most certainly bring out that same spirit of pride and

obstinacy which will incline us to resist authority, and to despise and therefore to neglect our obligations.

Let us behold the true life of the priest of God manifested by many holy ecclesiastics, and you will there perceive that while humility was the foundation it was also the ornament of their sanctity. It was the great mark of the Church founded by Christ, which went forth in her humility, to subdue all nations and to inhabit the earth, and it is also the striking characteristic of our own national Church, for it is in her humility and lowliness that she has her faith and strength.

Let us then cherish and cultivate this necessary and priestly virtue, always keeping before our eyes the warning words uttered by the Psalmist "I will make my humble people safe, and I will humble the eyes of the proud." Recollect the humble prayer of St. Augustine, who from his abilities had more reason to be proud than most men, and yet cried out "Lord, teach me to know thee and to know myself—to know thee, that I may ever honour and love thee; and to know myself, that I may be always conscious of my unworthiness and indignity." Pray with his earnestness and sincerity and God will hear you. Your life of preparation in the college will be full of piety and virtue, for humility will draw down the graces, and gather to you the gifts of God. Your life on the mission, will be efficient and useful, because humility brings many blessings in her train; your humble life will be the glory, and not the shame of the sanctuary. It will be the light, and not the scandal of the people. Full of years

and labours, full of gifts and blessings, you will resemble the apostle of the Gentiles, and you will be able to say, what he said to the priests and elders at Ephesus, “*Serviens Domino cum omni humilitate*”

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## ON DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

“*Cui assimilabo te?*” “*Cui exæquabo te, virgo, filia Sion?*”



HIS language of the inspired writer is aptly applied to her who was the first creature of God, and the first child of the Church. No language in truth is adequate to describe her great dignity, to express her elevated functions, to point out the perfection of her virtues, or the power of her intercession.

### 1. *Her dignity.*

Her dignity surpasses that of any human creature, nay even that of the angels themselves. St. Chrysostom says, that Prophets and Apostles, that Powers and Dominations, that Cherubim and Seraphim could not be compared with her. The Almighty God himself, in the very beginning, condescended in his wisdom to foreshadow her forthcoming excellence, when he said that “the seed of the woman should crush the serpent’s head.” The Prophets announce her advent in terms which cannot be misunderstood. The most heroic women of the Ancient Testament feebly represent and indicate her who was to come.

Esther, not more renowned for her natural perfections, than for the perfection of her virtue—Esther, the Queen of King Assuerus, was but a feeble figure of this queen of the virgins. Judith, who liberated her country from the threatened yoke—who was the honour and the saviour of her people—was but an imperfect type of her who was to co-operate so closely in saving the whole human race.

Passing from the types and figures of the Old Testament to the Christian Church, it is there we find her dignity most honoured and exalted. In speaking of it, the Saints and Fathers almost exhaust the words of commendation. The Liturgy of the Church; on occasion of her festivals, overflows with praise, and it is then the Church sings the hymn of joy, and that her words are full of gladness and exultation; and the children of the Church in obedience to their holy mother, have been always foremost in every age in acknowledging and in honouring the Blessed Virgin's dignity. In their daily prayer they address her by the title of the greatest dignity, for they call her the Mother of God, "*Sancta Maria, mater Dei.*" They say that God is with her, "*Ave Maria, gratia plena Dominus tecum.*" They style her their life, their sweetness, and their hope—"Salve Regina, mater misericordiæ, vita dulcedo et spes nostra salve," and in the Litany which all so frequently recite, they address her as the Mirror of Justice, the House of Gold, and the Vessel of Honour. In a word, all her dignity is summed up in that title given her by the Fathers of Ephesus, when they called her "*Mother of God.*"



*2. Her elevated functions.*

Consider also her elevated functions. No creature on the earth ever had such sublime duties. God in his wisdom selected her as the Mother of his Son. In the fulness of time she was to bring forth the Saviour of the human race, nor did her functions cease here, for she was to watch over Him with a mother's care and protection, and to receive from Him the obedience and subjection of a child. God destined her to take a great part in the vicissitudes and sufferings of her Son. Throughout his whole life she is never missed from the scene. Having wandered astray she sought Him, and found Him in the Temple. Preaching his mission, she followed in the crowd of his disciples, and heard from his lips the words of heavenly wisdom, and at the consummation of his sacrifice on Calvary, she stood by in grief and tears to offer Him to his Eternal Father, and to receive the remains of the human form from which his soul was fled. Surely no creature could have functions more holy, more elevated, or more sublime.

*3. Her extraordinary virtue.*

In accordance with this great dignity, and these elevated functions, did she excel in all manner of virtue. From the time of Adam's innocence in the garden, no creature ever exhibited such sinlessness and perfection. Though Abraham's faith was "reputed to him unto justice," yet she had more faith than Abraham. She served God in the Temple

more perfectly than Samuel, who served in it from his youth. Her sacrifice and her obedience were greater than Judith's, who devoted to God only her widowhood and declining years. David was a man after God's own heart, and her heart was more united to God than his. Other saints received graces in measure. She received all the fulness of grace. Though other saints were holy, they were not sinless; she was always without spot or stain, and her Immaculate Conception still more increases her privileges, and exalts her sanctity.

#### 4. *Utility of her intercessory power.*

It was not wonderful that her saying of the Canticle "*Beatam me dicent omnes generationes*" should be verified. It was not wonderful that the children of the Church in every age should turn to that creature who was perfect and powerful, to ask her intercession and favour with God. That passage in the Book of Wisdom has been well applied to her "*Qui me invenerit inveniet vitam*,"—He who shall find me, will find life—for either ecclesiastic or laic who is devoted to the Blessed Virgin will find the life and salvation of his soul. This is evident from the history of the past, in which this may be seen, that whenever the Church of a nation was devoted to her and honoured her by asking her intercession with God, that Church was free from impiety or disorder. Devotion to the Blessed Virgin kept out heresy from priests and people, never suffered any relaxation of morals, nor wickedness, nor contentions; but as soon as the Church or nation ceased to pray to the Mother of God, the flood of evil came on

rapidly, and impiety and heresy soon profaned and desecrated the house of God.

Turn then to this most excellent devotion. Turn to this most Blessed Virgin, who is so perfect and powerful, who is so full of compassion for all ecclesiastics who are predestined to the sanctuary, as she herself was the elect of the wisdom and of the predestination of God. The Almighty has remembered his promise to her, and has not been unmindful of his mercy. She is the creature that he loves to honour, and that he delights to exalt. To use the language of the Church he has made her "a cedar in Libanus and a cypress on the Mountain of Zion." He has blessed her with the dew of heaven, and the fertility of the earth. In her hands are placed the choicest graces and treasures of the wisdom and of the mercy of God.

Open then, and lay before her, all the wounds and wants of your soul. Beg of her above all things for the grace of ecclesiastical virtue and perfection. Ask for chastity, for humility, for the fear of God, for great zeal for souls. Beg of her that you may walk worthy of that vocation which God in his mercy has given you, and that you might bear well the dreadful burden which he has laid upon you, so that you may "Serve God in holiness and justice all your days."

## ON THE DIVINE OFFICE.

“Immola Deo Sacrificium laudis.”—PSALM xlix., 14.

### 1. *Its excellence and value.*



THE Divine Office is said through means of the Breviary. The Breviary is the book of public prayer, ordered by the Church to be recited at certain times by her ministers, that they may give due honour to God, and provide for their own sanctification. It is said to be a public prayer, because it is offered in the name of the whole Church—in the words specially ordered by the Church, and by ministers who are expressly deputed to that charge.

The excellence of this public prayer cannot be too highly estimated. After the unbloody sacrifice of the altar, it comes next in rank, as it is the great “sacrifice of praise.” It is through the means of this prayer that the Church militant most resembles the Church triumphant, echoing, though feebly, that praise and laudation of God which resound through heaven. As it is related in the Memoriale, the voice of God says, “Hosanna in excelsis mihi clamant Angeli, Hosanna in terris, tu mihi dices, Fili. O quam magnum, quam sanctum, quam divinum officium tuum.”

This office is divine indeed, and truly called so, because it is addressed to God, because it is offered by persons who become, as it were, divine by the

sanctity of their lives, and because it is made in these very words which have emanated from the Holy Spirit.

It is an action altogether heavenly, as it makes for us a heaven upon the earth. As far as our state will allow, it puts us in the enjoyment of the end of our creation, which is to praise and to glorify God.

It is an angelic action, for we repeat upon the earth what the angels fill all heaven with, namely, the praise of God. As they sing in heaven, so do we say on the earth, "*Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth, pleni sunt cœli et terra gloria tua.*"

It is an action which makes us, as it were, like God, (*Dii estis*), because we do thereby the exact work performed by God, who, from all eternity, loves and glorifies himself. For ecclesiastics bound to recite it, it has the greatest value. It is the Divine Office, the public manual of praise and prayer. It is the book of the Church, put into their hands to discharge a public duty to God, to themselves, and the people. It is a wise preacher, for it continually inculcates the Divine Law. It is an admonisher, because it reminds us of, and admonishes us on the moral duties of the Christian life. It is a consoler, as it consoles us, and supports us in our afflictions. It is a companion, from whom we can never learn anything but what is good. In fine, its holy recitation banishes idleness, seeks retirement, invites meditation, and lifts up our minds from the lower passions of the earth to the repose and contemplation of God.

## 2. *Of what is the Office composed.*

The Divine Office is made up in a great degree of the words of Scripture. Certain passages throughout the Bible have been selected, and inserted in this book of public prayer. They have been chosen with a view to instruct and to edify ecclesiastics who recite them; or, on account of the different festivals, to excite in us, for each of them, a becoming and appropriate devotion. We recite in the Office many psalms and hymns in praise of God. While they move our minds by the elevation and dignity of their style, they express all our varied feelings, passions, and wants before God—some in praise, some in entreaty, some in tones of joy, and some crying aloud for mercy.

In the Office we have also an abridgment of the lives of the saints, and of the pious actions which adorned them, so that we may be excited to their imitation; and there are also the homilies of the Holy Fathers, to shew us what a great value they set upon the Holy Scriptures, and how they thought and nourished the people with the word of God.

Behold what the Divine Office is composed of, and be convinced that its holy recitation is of all things the most calculated to exalt your minds, to improve your heart, to reform your lives, and to incite you to the practice of all your ecclesiastical duties.

## 3. *Its obligation.*

The obligation of reciting the Divine Office regards all those who receive Holy Orders. It is imposed on them by the Church, that they may in her

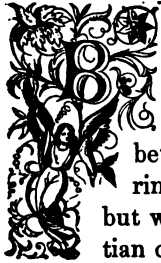
name, and that of her people, offer to God the just tribute of their praise, adoration, and thanksgiving. They are bound to recite it every day under pain of mortal sin, and to do so with respect, attention, and devotion. Any ecclesiastic bound to its recitation, that would neglect it entirely, or in considerable part, would violate one of the gravest obligations imposed by the Church, and would commit one of the greatest sins before God. But, without the omission of any part of it, should he recite it without respect, attention, or devotion, hurriedly rushing into God's presence without any preparation, abandoning himself to voluntary distractions, it is then certain that, violating his obligation, he commits the gravest sin, and turns the instrument of his life into the cause of his death.

This recitation of the Office, instead of being a great prayer of praise and of entreaty for the mercy of God, becomes an insult and an offence. The anger of God is excited by such an Office, because his good gifts are flung away, because the institution of his mercy is turned into contempt, and he is despised in the very graces which he confers. No wonder that the ministry of such ecclesiastics should be unfruitful, and that their people should be without virtue, "when their prayer is turned to sin."

These wicked and careless ecclesiastics should bear in their minds the expressions of the Prophet: "Now, O ye priests, this commandment is to you. If you will not lay it to heart to give glory to my name I will curse your blessings."

## ON THE OBLIGATION OF PREACHING.

“*Prædica verbum ; insta opportune, importune.*”—2 TIM. iv., 2.

Y the word preaching is here understood what is usually meant by sermons addressed to Christian congregations. There is a distinction made between the two words, preaching referring to infidels, and sermons to Christians; but we use the word as referring to Christian communities instructed in the Church. We do not include under it advice, exhortation, or instruction, given in the confessional or elsewhere.

Parish priests have this duty of preaching and instructing their people every where laid down as one of their first and principal duties. Were there never a law of the Church upon this subject the nature of the parochial office sufficiently establishes this obligation; because, were this means of instruction abandoned, the other ordinary means at the disposal of the Church would not be in themselves sufficient to instruct the people properly in the principles of Christian doctrine, and in all their moral duties and obligations. But we are not left to reason on this matter, for it is clearly laid down in the common law of the Church. The Council of Trent, (sess. 5, c. 2—*De Reform*) speaking upon this subject says, “*Et quicumque parochiales vel alias, curam animarum habentes ecclesias per se vel alios, idoneos, si legitime impediti fuerint, diebus saltem dominicis et festis solemnibus, plebes sibi commissas pro sua et*



earum capacitate pascant salutaribus verbis." The general obligation derived from this law of the Council of Trent is referred to in the Synod of Thurles, though the manner or time of discharging that duty was not made matter of precept. The words are the following—"Singulis Dominicis et diebus festivis volumus est pabulo doctrinæ Christianæ pastores fideles populas enutrient. Hoc officium per se parochi adimplere tenentur nisi legitime impediti fuerint (Conc. Trid.) implere autem debent juxta idem Concilium, cum brevitate et facilitate sermonis."

Consider, in the second place, that curates are also obliged to preach and to instruct the people. This is evident, because they are coadjutors and assistants to the parish priest, and are therefore obliged to assist him in the discharge of his obligations, one of the principal of which is preaching.

The Synod of Thurles, in the cap. "De Coadjutoribus Parochorum," clearly lays down the obligation for curates in the following words: "Tenentur tamen generatim in muniis curæ parochiali annexis parochum adjuvare ideoque prædicare." In relation to curates it is stated in the same chapter by the Synod: "Eorum jura et munera definiri debent ab Episcopis." Now if in any diocese the Bishop not only states this obligation but also specifies and lays down the time for discharging it they are clearly bound to fulfil the obligation in the manner prescribed.

Consider in the third place the false reasons and the vain excuses which are put forward by many to avoid and to neglect this great obligation. Some plead a want of sufficient time to prepare their

discourses, saying, that they are otherwise too much occupied, and have not enough of time for this. Such persons should ask themselves, how much time do they spend on matters which have no connection with their ministry, or with their holy profession. Even were they entirely engaged in the duties of their state, the principal obligations of their ministry have the first claim upon their attention, and they should not engage themselves in trifling matters of comparatively little importance to the neglect of higher interests and more sacred obligations.

Other persons say, and make out, that the people are sufficiently well instructed, and that it becomes tedious and troublesome to them to be continually hearing sermons. To this it may be said that any one who preaches with earnestness and simplicity will never be a trouble to his audience; and, as for the superior instruction, there is hardly a parish in this country where there is not a vast amount of ignorance to be found, and that even in the most fundamental and necessary articles of the Christian belief. Lastly, there are some who do not preach as they ought, because they should do so in their own plain language, and simple manner; and are content to discharge this important duty by now and then delivering some eloquent sermon written in set and stereotyped phrase. These preachers do not follow the advice of the Council of Trent, who recommends them to speak "*cum brevitae et faciliate sermonis.*" Their words do not consist like the Apostle's "in the shewing of the spirit, and of the power, but are the persuasive words of human wisdom." On the contrary, having carefully considered their subject


matter, they should endeavour to preach with simple and unaffected earnestness, speaking the language of the heart, and thereby more calculated to instruct the people in the principles of Christian doctrine, and to move them to practise the great duties and obligations of their religion. If the preacher act thus, it will become easy to him. He will be likely to do it often and not to defer it. God will be with him in his unaffected labour. The Psalmist says: "Dabit Dominus verbum evangelizantibus multa virtute."

Resolve if there be any diocesan or parochial rules with regard to this matter, to observe them well, and never to neglect this duty, so necessary for the interest of the Church, and the salvation of souls.

## ON CATECHETICAL INSTRUCTION.

"Parvuli petierunt panem et non erat qui frangeret eis."

### 1. *Its excellence.*

N the Christian ministry there may be functions which are more honorable before men, but certainly there is none more useful, or more excellent, than the office of catechist. The future excellence of the Christian depends on these first lessons given through catechism. It is the elementary book of the Christian religion. After preaching, it is the second public manifestation of the Gospel put in a form adapted to the capacity of children and youth. It is from this

catechism, when properly explained and understood, that children learn the first rudiments of Christian doctrine, and become acquainted with the great and necessary truths of salvation; and it is upon these catechetical instructions that depend in a great degree the well-being and the perseverance of their future life. Ignorance is the bane and curse of religion; and the catechism, taught and explained as it should be, removes ignorance and opens the mind to the knowledge of God and of his law, unfolds the graces and points out the mysteries of religion, and makes the youthful mind sufficiently informed and acquainted with Christian duties and moral obligations.

This catechetical instruction, in whatever form it is given, whether by way of question and answer, or otherwise, is commended to us by the most illustrious example, for our divine Saviour received, instructed, and blessed little children, saying to his Apostles: "Suffer the little ones to come unto me and forbid them not, for such is the kingdom of God." This function of catechist was also fulfilled by the most illustrious saints and prelates of the Church of God, who, in the midst of their multiplied cares and avocations, did not think it unworthy of their elevated rank and ministry, to do what Jesus Christ did before them, that is, to teach the young. No priest, therefore, should look on this duty as less honorable, but consider only that it is accompanied and blessed with the greatest fruits, always remembering that in a parish a good catechist is said to be more useful than a grand preacher.

## 2. *Its necessity.*

A parish that has no catechism will soon have no religion. The ignorance of youth will be confirmed in manhood, and in old age. The ordinary instruction given in the Church will not serve to remove it, for it will not be understood, there being no catechetical preparation beforehand; and, thus without the catechism to instruct them in their youth, many persons, bearing the name of Catholics, will live and die without the necessary knowledge of their religion.

In every parish, however, the catechism is taught, and from its precepts children learn to know God, and to love him in their youth; but the important consideration is—is it taught or explained by the priest?—for, were it not so, its teaching will be deprived of much value, and the good otherwise accruing will be reduced to very small limits. When the catechism is taught by lay persons, even though they were highly educated, and when the children learn it by rote, it does not produce the same effect on their minds, or the same fruit in their souls, as it would, were it explained to them by the priest, who is versed in theology, and who knows how to adopt his accurate instruction to their youthful minds. Hence the necessity on the part of the priest of discharging this duty in person.

There are other reasons why the priest should personally discharge this, equally as well as any other pastoral duty. All writers state, that the function of catechist is one of his principal pastoral functions. Children belong to, and form portion of his flock.

He is their teacher appointed by Almighty God, and if so why would he not teach them? It does not suffice to leave that duty to others, for when it is in his power he should discharge it himself. He is their pastor—why should he give up the pastor's duty? He is their doctor and their master in religion. Is there any one so fitted as he is to teach them all that they ought to know, and to form and to train their growing minds to the principles and habits of virtue

It is true, that in some places priests have not time sufficient for this important duty. It is then impossible in their regard, and thus are they excused before Almighty God, but every priest should examine himself well, to see whether or not it is in his power, and whether he turns away without any cause from that, of which Jesus Christ gave him the example, as if it were unworthy of his talents, and below the decency and the dignity of his ministry.

Finally, the Council of Trent requires of the chief pastors of the Church that they would compel priests, if necessary by ecclesiastical censure, to discharge this most necessary and important duty. "*Episcopi saltem dominicis et aliis festivis diebus, pueros in singulis parochiis fidei rudimenta, et obedientiam erga Deum, et parentes, diligenter ab iis ad quos spectabit doceri curabunt, et si opus sit, etiam per censuras ecclesiasticas compellent.*"

## ON THE MALICE OF SIN IN A PRIEST.

“Si inimicus meus maledixisset mihi sustinuissem utique : tu vero homo unanimes dux meus et notus meus.”

### 1. *Its malice seen from his greater knowledge.*



HE sin of any Christian is detestable in the sight of God for many reasons. Not only does he offend God, great, and good, and generous, but he also violates the promises of his baptism, and practically deserts the faith in which he was confirmed. He sinned with all the light that knowledge threw upon his sin, and it becomes on this account the greater, and its forgiveness the more difficult. But how much greater is the sin of an ecclesiastic, who has much more knowledge than the ordinary faithful, and who is especially enlightened by “the true light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world.” The priest is instructed in all the mysteries of faith. His lips keep wisdom, and from his mouth flows the testament of God. Advice and instruction are given by him to others. Council and precept are unfolded, and he dispenses the law of God from the seat of justice. All the forms which aggravate and multiply sin he knows well, and if he commit sin he does so in the midst of light and knowledge.

Ordinary defects are often committed from ignorance, from want of advertence, or from sudden passion, and are therefore less sinful; but the sins of

priests are, generally speaking, not of this character, and are consequently in no way diminished. The priest knows the motives compelling him to abstain from sin. He knows the occasion of sin, which he should turn from. He knows the remedies against the threatened danger. He knows that the means of avoiding it are in his hands, and if he commit sin, he does so in the midst of light and knowledge.

He cannot excuse himself like St. Paul, who in his sinful life persecuted the Church of God, and who tells us that he acted "ignorantly in his unbelief." He is more blamable than the Jews, who nailed Our Saviour to the Cross, because "they knew not what they did," and the apostle tells us, "that if they did know it, they never would have crucified the Lord of Glory." But the priest who commits sin knows well what he does. He knows the goodness of the God whom he offends and insults, and whom his sin crucifies again. He knows that his sins are unsuitable to a ruler, and unfit him even for being a servant in God's house. When he is there, he is conscious that the abomination of desolation is in the holy place. He knows the rapine which he commits in the holocaust, and the sacrilege in the sanctuary. Wo to his malice and to his great sin, for it is committed in the midst of light and knowledge.

## *2. Its malice seen from the Priest's mission and character.*

The malice of the sin of a priest is also seen from the character with which he is invested, and from the mission which he receives. The priest is the friend,



the bosom friend of his Divine Saviour. He is his confidant, knowing his secrets, and partaking of his love. He is his minister, his ambassador upon the earth, representing his interests, and charged with their care. He is the mediator between God and the people, inasmuch as he offers prayers and sacrifices on their behalf. Above all he is God's priest, bound to him by the vows or obligations of ordination, and if he commit sin, it is evident that he prefers his passions to his vows, and his pleasures to their salvation. If he commit sin, it is made dreadful by the crime of treason to his office and character, and by the horrid sin of ingratitude.

To God's special love and predilection he is insensible. The grace of his priestly vocation he entirely neglects. The nobleness and sanctity of the message which he brings does not lift up his mind from the degradation of sin. The exalted character of the mission on which he is sent does not secure his virtue, or exalt his views, above the passions of sin. The holy respect in which he is held by the people does not restrain him, nor does his education or spiritual life, though they should make sin detestable in his sight. All these do not raise him above the commission of sin, and the baseness which it inspires, and when he falls down to the earth, like another Judas, all these conspire to aggravate his guilt, and to increase its enormity. Sin turns his light to darkness. It makes him the unsavoury salt, which is good for nothing. Invested with the priestly character, surrounded with the holy things of his office, priest of the New Law, and minister of the better covenant, he chooses to do iniquity in the house of

God, and the more dreadful and the more aggravated is his guilt.

3. *Its malice seen from punishment.*

It is impossible to know for certain the degree of punishment inflicted on sinful priests in the next world. It is said by some, that the lowest hell, and that the greatest pain are the portion of the wicked ecclesiastic. If this be true it may be fairly inferred, according to the ordinary principles of justice, that their sin is of exceeding malice.

Nor, can it be said, what unseen punishments God inflicts upon them while on this earth, by giving them over to their fierce passions and their hardened hearts, the preliminary and the preparation for the wrath to come. But, in the Old Testament, we have some evidence of the visible punishment inflicted by God upon wicked priests, and in the great evil with which they were struck, we see the great malice of their sin. It is related in the Book of Leviticus, that Nadab and Abiu, the sons of Aaron, ministering at the altar, put strange fire into the censer, and were thereupon consumed with fire from heaven. Sacred writers, speaking on this matter, say that this strange fire is the figure of a disordered heart, the figure of an affection which is gone astray, and which is not turned to God. Oza the Levite only touched the Ark of God in an improper manner, and Oza the Levite was struck dead. The sons of Heli the High Priest, priests themselves, oppressed the people, taking largely of their goods and substance, and, what was worse, abandoned themselves to the lowest and most wicked sensuality, and when evils came upon their

country, they went out against the enemy with the Ark of the Testimony and with the weapons of war, and the Lord God in his anger slew these wicked priests with the sword of justice in the midst of the battle. Behold the fearful evils which fell upon these wicked priests, and behold in their punishment the malice of their sin.

If you have committed sins in the sanctuary tremble before God, and cry aloud for mercy in the language of the Psalmist: "For thy name's sake, O Lord, thou wilt pardon me my sin, for it is exceeding great."

## ON AVARICE.

"Docentes quæ non oportet turpis lucri gratia."—TITUS, i. 11.



HE Almighty God clearly pronounces in the inspired word his sentence of condemnation on avarice, and points out the evils thereof.

1. *From the Scripture.*

It is said in the Book of Proverbs: "He who gives himself to avarice brings trouble into his house." In the Book of Ecclesiasticus it is written: "Nothing is more wicked than the covetous man. There is not a more wicked thing than to love money, for such a one setteth even his own soul to sale," and the Book of Proverbs says: "that hell and destruction are never filled, so the eyes of men are never satisfied." Again it is said, "if riches abound set not your heart upon them." "What doth pride

avail you," says the Wise Man, "and what advantages have you drawn from the vain boasting of riches?" Of the corruption induced by avarice, we have a striking example in the First Book of Kings, in the case of the sons of Samuel, who were judges in Israel, for "they turned aside after lucre," as we are told, and the result was, that "they perverted judgment."

## 2. *From the Fathers.*

St. Jerome says "*Ignominia omnium sacerdotum est propriis studere divitiis*," and again he says that "all sins grow old with man in age, but that avarice alone becomes young from day to day."

St. Basil writes "Fly gold as the betrayer of the soul, as the father of sin, and as the minister of the devil."

St. Augustine says that "the avaricious man is like hell. Notwithstanding all that hell can swallow up, it never says there is enough. So it is with the avaricious man, even when all the treasures of the earth are flowing to him."

Pope Innocent writes about the avaricious in this manner. "The man given over to avarice has no commiseration. He has no pity for the poor. He does not come to their assistance. He offends at the same time—God, his neighbour, and himself, for he is ungrateful to God, wicked towards his neighbour, and cruel towards himself."

In St. Bernard's sermon on adversity he cries out, "Hear, O sons of Adam, proud and avaricious race, of what use to you are the goods of the earth, and the glory of the world, which are not true goods, and which do not belong to you. What are gold

and silver but a little white and yellow clay to which an illusion of men attaches certain value."

St. Peter Damian in his treatise on "the Love of Money" writes, "Let a man be chaste, and sober, let him support the indigent, let him be given to hospitality, let him fast, let him watch, let him prolong the day into the night by psalmody, if, however, he be avaricious, he destroys all, so that amongst those guilty of all crimes, he can find no one more wicked than himself. The avaricious priest may go and build churches, he may devote himself to preaching, he may join in peace those who were separated, he may confirm the wavering in the truths of the Catholic faith, every day he may offer up the Holy Sacrifice, and be far removed from all secular pursuits, however, as long as the fire of avarice is unextinguished in him, all the flower of his virtue is stripped away, and there is none to be found more criminal than he."

### 3. *From the Councils.*

The Council of Trent says, "Ab ecclesiastico ordine omnis avaritiæ suspicio abesse debet."

The Synod of Thurles (*De vita et honestate clericorum*, 12) says, "Omne studium et gloriam suam non in luxu et fastu proprio, nec in divitiis mundanis sed in eo reponant, ut domus Dei rite ornata, et omni decore plena, sit, ut que vineæ spirituales sibi commissæ virtutibus floreat, et opportuno tempore dent fructum suum."

The Statutes observed through the Province of Dublin, speaking on this subject say, "Nunquam obliviscantur clerici, se non solum esse discipulos

verum etiam ministros ejus, 'qui cum esset dives propter nos egenus factus est, et maximam curam adhibeant, ne aut mundano fastu aut turpi avaritia populum compellant, ex diverso conferre actus et mores nostros cum doctrina et exemplo Christi et Apostolorum. Justum quid em est, ut quialtari deserviunt cum altari participant, et Dominus ordinavit iis, qui Evangelium annuntient de Evangelio vivere. Sed neque Dominus ordinavit, neque justum est, ut ministri ejus plus requirant quam victum decentem et convenientem.' 'Habentes alimenta et quibus tegamur his, ait Apostolus contenti simus.' Nec unquam oblivisci debemus populum nobis commissum, gravari magnis oneribus multaque deprimi egestate, et charitati Christianæ omnino repugnare, ut ministri ejus qui non habuit ubi caput reclinaret viverant in deliciis; aut etiam commoda hujus vitæ compararent ex incommodis eorum qui misera paupertate demerguntur."


"Iterum atque iterum pensanda verba Apostoli, 'Qui volunt divites fieri incidunt intetationem et in laqueum diaboli et desideria multa inutilia et nociva quæ mergunt homines in interitum et perditionem. Radix enim omnium malorum est cupiditas quam quidam appetentes erraverunt a fide.' Serio igitur meditentur clerici nummi amorem, etiam in laicis culpandum, multo nigris deformem esse in ipsis qui parvo vivere debent contenti, quique Domino in hæreditatem sumpto non nisi ejus majorem gloriam, ac salutem animarum sua sacra professione quærere tenentur. Si juxta Apostolum, hi qui avaritia ducuntur in desideria nociva et inutilia quæ mergunt homines in interitum incidunt, quanto magis hi qui

dona cœlestia perceperunt ut eadem gratis impendant cœlestem iram vix ne vix quidem evadere poterunt ac si mysteria divina sacramenta scilicet Christi, venalia exhibeant."

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## ON SUFFERING.

"Necesse est pati et ita intrare in gloriam."

 UR Divine Lord, who founded our religion, and who has instructed us by his self-denying precepts as well as by his mortified life, tells us that we never can attain to the happiness of heaven if we do not suffer. There is no other way to the heavenly inheritance but the thorny way of tribulation. Our religion is one of suffering, because it is the religion of the Cross, and whosoever embraces it must, after the example of his Divine Master, take up his cross and follow him. This is the ordinary, the natural, the necessary state of the Christian life.

If it be true that suffering is the portion of every good Christian, equally true is it, that it is the portion of every good ecclesiastic, who not only has all the obligations common to the Christian life, but in addition embraces a state peculiarly and eminently connected with suffering. The ecclesiastical life in its very nature, is austere and self-denying. It loves solitude and retirement. It lives in the midst of privation and labour. It preaches a mortification which it cannot but practise. Its end and object being

for the good of others, it is full of self-sacrifice and self-denial, and charged as it is with the interests of the people, it undergoes and sympathises in their pain and sorrow. Christ himself, the first Christian priest, suffered exceedingly in his mission and priesthood, and ever since, the priestly office has been accompanied with care, and labour, and sorrow and suffering.

### 1. *Necessity of suffering.*

Consider that the life of an ecclesiastic is one of self-denial and privation, if not of actual suffering. His mind and his time are never his own. The care and the charge of a good priest are unceasing, because they are proportioned to his great and continual responsibility. While he is the guide he is also the servant of the flock. He is liable to be called on at any time, and he must be always ready, to administer the sacraments, and the obligation is the greater, when the call comes from the poorest and the meanest of the people. He must lose his own peace, and tranquillity of mind, that he may heal the dissensions and reconcile the minds of others. In some degree he covers himself with the sufferings which some of his people must meet with, and he softens their sorrow by his own pain and sympathy. Before the eyes of his people, he must lead a life of mortification and self-denial, otherwise he will be a living contradiction to the Gospel which he preaches. Like the Apostle, he will exhort his people, in season and out of season; and the holy tribunal, where the tears of repentance are shed, will be the scene of his unceasing labour. His projects of piety and discipline



will be opposed. The life of labour which he leads will be censured and caluminated by the envious and the malignant; and the wicked world, and even some of his own order, may say evil things against him falsely, but it is by these labours and sufferings that he resembles the true pastor Jesus Christ, whose ministry and mission were a continual scene of labour and suffering.

Viewed in a certain light, the student life of preparation in the college, is also one of pain and privation. He must give up his own will and his own way. He must give an unqualified submission to the rule, and discharge all its commands, with an exact obedience. He must love prayer, and retirement, and silence, and study. Like Samuel in the Temple, he must listen to the voice of God, to know his will, and to follow it, and he must train himself in the spirit of self restraint, and mortification, which he will have to preach hereafter to the people by word and example.

## *2. The Advantages of Sufferings.*

Though the labours and sufferings of our ministry be severe, yet when considered by the light of faith, and weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, they are solid goods and advantages, because these sufferings keep our eyes open to the true condition of our souls, which ecclesiastics are very liable to forget, and to neglect. Our passions are liable to grow and flourish in prosperity and happiness, and when we have no care nor labour to oppress us, no sorrow to turn us to God, we follow the consolations of the world, which are so dangerous, and forget the fatigues and sufferings of our ministry. Adversity,

even in a small degree, checks these evils. The priest who is proud is humbled by tribulation. The passionate man, who insults and cannot spare his people, will become meek and humble when visited by sorrow and sufferings. Calamity dries up the passions of the wicked; and the dissipated and the disorderly, when chastened by sorrow or subdued by labour, become models of order and virtue.

The Sacred Scripture proves by many examples the benefit of suffering. The prodigal would have never returned to his Father's house, were he not suffering great want and almost perishing from hunger. The kingly pride and the hard heart of Pharaoh, were humbled only when the hand of God struck him with calamity. Famine drove the brethren of Joseph into Egypt to look for bread. This brought on their reconciliation with their brother, and gave consolation to their aged father, who was descending in sorrow to the grave. David, whose sins cried out against him, never turned to God until he was visited with his anger. "I am turned in my anguish whilst the thorn is fastened," and again he exclaims, "I have found tribulation, and I will invoke the name of my God."

Besides keeping us alive to our natural weakness and to our true condition, sufferings are also means of merit and expiation. When we enjoy the friendship of God, these sufferings offered up in union with those of Christ, will draw upon us, through God's mercy, many series of graces, and they are also means of expiating and redeeming our future sufferings in the world to come. The hand of God is heavy upon us here, and compels us, as it were, to discharge the

penance which we would otherwise neglect, and to blot out the immense debt due to his divine justice. If from the moment that we step into the sanctuary God sends us crosses and afflictions, if he oppress us, as it were, with the painful labours and duties inseparable from our ministry, it is for our correction and improvement, it is to humble and to purify our souls, it is to turn our eyes within, that they may behold the inconstancy of our hearts, and the weakness of our condition, it is to gather to us during our ministry all the fruits of that justice, and the merit of that virtue, of which before the eyes of the people we should be the greatest examples.

### 3. *The Church of God a Church of suffering.*

It is unnecessary to show the advantages of sufferings, for is not the religion in which we believe and in which we are the faithful ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God, is it not a religion of suffering? It was founded in suffering—it was consummated in suffering—it was continued and propagated through suffering. To its children, it preaches self-denial and suffering, and all its rewards are to be reached through the narrow and thorny path of tribulation. If any one think otherwise he is mistaken, for the Apostle says, “that it is through many tribulations we are to enter the kingdom of God;” and hear the unalterable rule laid down by Divine Wisdom, “If any man will come after me let him take up his cross, deny himself, and follow me.”

When was it otherwise, with those who truly served the altar, and preached the Gospel? Were

they not all children of sorrow? They were persecuted in every age. Because they preached Christ and Him crucified, they were brought before Kings and Princes, and suffered disgrace and contumely at the hands of wicked men. They were despised and insulted, and calumniated and reviled, until they became like their Divine Master, who was a man of sorrow, and was not our own National Church for many an age a patient and a suffering Church, and during the night of her captivity did she not imitate the sufferings and show forth the constancy of her Saviour? If those who went before suffered exceedingly are we to be free who follow? If they, like the Apostle, served God in perils and sufferings are we to live after the fashion and indulgence of the world? If we would reign with Christ, we must suffer with Him, if we would live with Him we must die with Him.

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### ON THE DEVOTION OF A PRIEST TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

"Hic est panis qui de cœlo descendit."—JOAN. vi., 59.



T is not wonderful that ecclesiastics should have a great devotion to this holy sacrament, in as much as they are ministers upon that altar of which the Blessed Sacrament is the sun and the light, the glory and the victim. This sacrament is the great miracle and prodigy of love. It is the mystery of faith, unheard of, and ineffable. It is the great proof and argument

of the divine charity for our souls. It is the countless treasure which is above all human treasure, filling with joy every heart which turns to it in sincerity and truth. Faith should have vanished from the house of God, and charity should have grown cold, were ecclesiastics wanting in love and devotion to this heavenly sacrament.

Consider, in the first place, that priests are bound to greater devotion to this holy sacrament on account of the greater and wonderful power that they have received in its regard. The words of the priest, full of mysterious power, draw down God upon the altar, and place there the great victim which was the promise and the proof of love. No other priesthood ever exercised such a power. No other Church witnessed such a sacrifice. It was never performed even by virtue of angels. The power of the priest being so wonderful and great, his devotion and reverence therefore should be in the same degree, according to the principle of divine justice. "From him to whom much is given much shall be required."

In regard of this sacrament, the priest has more power than the faithful. Hence his adoration and worship should be much greater than theirs. Yet how much are they bound to? They must frequently receive the Holy Communion. They should love our Lord in the sacrament with a tender love. They must give him frequent reverence and adoration, and they must always nourish, in the secret of their hearts, for this heavenly sacrament a continual and fervent devotion. If such be the duty of the faithful, what must be the higher duty and the greater reverence of the priest, through whose hands God confers such

a great favour, and whom he makes the medium of such a heavenly blessing.

Consider, in the second place, that priests on the mission have to discharge in relation to this sacrament the most solemn and important functions, and that they never can fulfil this duty properly if they have not a great devotion to this heavenly sacrament. Priests contract with the Blessed Sacrament the most secret, the most intimate, and the most familiar relations. They are the guardians and preservers of it. In the course of their ministry, they have to remove, to expose, and to administer it, and they frequently carry it to the dying as their last consolation. They live with it a secret and familiar life. Now it is impossible for the priest to live this life, and to fulfil these functions, which are so solemn and necessary, without a great devotion and tender love for this holy sacrament, for he will be wanting in that reverence and adoration which should in every way surround this august mystery.

Moreover, if the priest have not great faith in this heavenly mystery, and great devotion towards it, he will never discharge one of his principal obligations, which is, to have his people always devoted to their Saviour in the Sacrament, and frequently receiving it. It is his duty to explain to the people the doctrine of the Church on this mystery, telling them especially that their spiritual life is impossible unless they receive the flesh of the Son of man. Every thing which assists and keeps alive this devotion, the priest should attend to; the Perpetual Adoration, if it should happen to exist in the parish; the Forty Hours Adoration; the Daily Visitation; the Indulgences

accorded by the Church to its worthy reception on Sundays and Feasts. All or some of these at least, he should frequently speak of by way of encouraging the people, and from the altar he should often proclaim the wonder, and faith, and charity, of this great mystery. These things will never be done by the priest who has no love; and, cold and unmoved himself, he will bring on the coldness and tepidity of his people.

Putting out of view the greater power the priest has received, and the obligations entailed by the proper discharge of his duties, consider, in the third place, that the priest should have great devotion on account of the consolation our Lord is to him in the sacrament, and the relief He is to him in his necessities.

St. Thomas says "that there is no nation that hath their God so nigh to them, as Thou our God art present to us." This is true in regard of the faithful, and it is especially true in regard of the priest, for the very house in which he lives is frequently the house and residence of this great King. Here at his hand, is this fountain of grace and this treasure of mercy. Within his reach is the most admirable invention of the wisdom of God, the most striking manifestation of his divine charity.

Formerly, in the Ancient Law, God never appeared except in the commotion of nature, striking terror into the minds of all. Here is every day before the priest a Presence, merciful and gracious, continually asking him to "come and taste and see how sweet the Lord is." In the Old Law there was but one mercy seat, which stood in the Temple,

between the cherubim, where God heard the prayers and listened to the cry of his people. There is no such difficulty now, for every priest can behold every day, the holy Tabernacle, which is the new mercy seat of God—for God, as he multiplied his dwelling, so has he increased the place of his mercy. There every day the priest can ask for help, and can turn for consolation. There is God the sacrifice, the victim, the Comforter, the food of angels, the nourishment of souls, the living bread from Heaven. Surely, it is there, before this Blessed Sacrament, that the priest will turn and live the life hidden with Christ in God—that he will be filled with the plenty of God's house, and be inebriated with the torrent of his heavenly delights.

Resolve to pay a visit every day to the Blessed Sacrament, and to feel and to manifest for it a generous and a fervent devotion.





## ON THE ANALOGY BETWEEN PRIESTS AND THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

“Ecce ancilla Domini, fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum.”—  
LUC. i, 38.

### 1. *Similarity of Office.*



HERE is a striking similitude between the office which the Blessed Virgin fulfilled, and the ministry of priests. In all their devotion to the Blessed Virgin, it should never be forgotten by ecclesiastics, that their duties, whether they regard the natural or mystic body of Christ, closely resemble the important and sublime functions which she was called upon to perform.

In the designs of Providence, who called and who prepared her for it, she was elevated to the highest dignity which human creature could occupy, for she was made “the Mother of God.” She was to bring forth the Saviour of the world, and was thereby to co-operate, in no remote degree, in the salvation of all men. Nor were her duties limited to this function, for she was also to support, and to nourish in her arms, the incarnate Word of God, and to watch over his childhood and his increasing years with a mother’s affection. All the care and interest which a parent naturally bestows upon a child, and which she gave to her Divine Redeemer, were doubtless deepened and intensified by the knowledge which she possessed, that he was the Son of

the everlasting God. Even when he began his public life she did not desert him, following him where-soever he went, and when he gave up his spirit on the Cross with cries and tears, she was there to witness the last great sacrifice which he made, and, in conjunction with him, to offer up the great immolation, which was to save us all.

Now, consider well, that the functions of a priest are very similar to all this, for as the Blessed Virgin brought Our Saviour into the world, so also the priest by the sacred words of consecration brings or produces the same Man God whom she brought forth at Bethlehem; not indeed passable and mortal, as He then was, but immortal and impassable as He is in heaven. He has to take Him into his hands holding Him exposed for the worship and adoration of the faithful, even as the Blessed Virgin held Him in her arms, supporting Him as a child, and adoring Him as her God. The priest has to receive Him himself, and to deliver Him to the faithful, as the food of life, and the sanctification of souls. The Blessed Virgin did something similar when she offered Him upon the cross, as a saving sacrifice for all men. The priest has to accompany the Blessed Sacrament, and to carry it with veneration to the sick and dying. The Blessed Virgin frequently carried Him in her arms during his infant years. Oftentimes the priest has to live in the one house with his Divine Saviour—so did the Blessed Virgin during all the years of his private life.

Thus can be traced a striking likeness or analogy between the office of the Blessed Virgin and the office of priests concerning the natural body of Our

Saviour, and this is equally true regarding the mystic body of Christ, that is, having Our Saviour born and preserved in the souls of the people, for that which the Blessed Virgin did in the flesh for the new born Saviour the good priest does in the spirit for the new born soul.

## 2. *Similarity of Virtue.*

The Blessed Virgin was not raised to this high and sublime dignity without being well prepared for it by the Almighty God. He gave her wonderful graces, for she was sanctified in the womb of her mother, and more than that, she was free from all stain of sin in conception. Her infant and her maturer years—her whole life were adorned with all manner of virtue and perfection, so that she was every way worthy to carry out the merciful designs of God. Above all, she was distinguished for a great purity of mind and body. She had a purity exceeding that of the angels. She is called by the Church the “Mater Castissima,” remaining a Virgin even when she became a Mother. If such excelling purity was fittingly given her by the Almighty because she was to bring forth the Son of God, what ought to be the purity of mind and body which a priest should have, who brings every day upon the altar that same Son of God, the holy and the just one, the model of all purity and innocence?

The Blessed Virgin was also remarkable for her great humility. It was displayed throughout her whole life. We see it in a striking manner in the interview with the angel, for when the angel announced his message, though she was unable to

comprehend its full meaning, her humility caused her submission, saying that she was the servant of the Lord and that his will should be perfected in her.

We also see it in that canticle of praise which she uttered under the divine inspiration, for she praised the Lord her God for having had regard to the lowliness of his handmaid. This also we are also to observe in the Blessed Virgin, that although her dignity of Mother of God was so great—her privilege was so remarkable, never having been given to any other human creature, still they never made her forget that she was altogether dependent upon God, and that he loves the little and the humble.


Ecclesiastics should endeavour to practise this great virtue of the Blessed Virgin, always bearing in mind that they are not so much the masters and rulers as the guides and servants of the flock. They should love and practise the lowest and most inferior of their duties, as well as the highest and most honorable. The honour and respect which the people pay the priestly office, they never in pride should take to themselves, and like the Blessed Virgin they should always remember that they are dependent in all things upon Almighty God, who loves to exalt the humble, and who orders all things according to his will.

Besides the purity and humility of the Blessed Virgin, she had great faith—great charity and conformity to the will of God, and priests should resolve and endeavour to practise something of the excellence of her virtues as they are called to discharge a somewhat similar office.

## ON DOING PENANCE.

“Vade, ostende te sacerdoti.” MATT. viii., 4.

### 1. *Its obligation.*

 ONE of the first Christian obligations, regarding all which was announced by by our Divine Saviour in preaching his Mission, was that of penance. From this we see how necessary is penance interior and exterior for ecclesiastics, as well as for those who live in the world. There is no exception made for the former no more than for the latter, for our Saviour has said “unless you do penance you shall all perish alike.

God has ordained for sin either penance or punishment, and since all sin, be it little or much, all must do some penance if they would escape the assigned penalty. There is no one without sin, and therefore there is no one free from some penitential obligation. Even the gaining of an indulgence is a penitential work. St. John says, that if any one say that he is without sin he is a liar, and the truth is not in him. The perfection of the ecclesiastical state, the certainty of vocation, the special graces of the priesthood, the continual exercise of the sacred ministry, the most eminent gifts of God, do not prevent ecclesiastics from sin, and do not therefore excuse penance. All these were found in men whose sins were great, and whose penance was extraordinary.

Reflect also, that if penance be written in the Divine Law, if it be preached from the Altar, if it be taught in the Confessional, how is it that it is so seldom found in the Sanctuary? Are ecclesiastics alone to be without penance either in spirit or works, while there is a penitential obligation imposed on the people and performed by them?

People in the world are subject to many temptations. They are drawn away by sensual indulgence, and are attracted by all which pamper and flatter the senses, and it will be hard for them to imbibe the spirit, or to practise the works of a penitential life, if in this particular they have neither example nor edification from their pastors. A priest without mortification and penance contradicts the Christian life which he should lead, and the holy Gospel which he preaches. His character will not inspire the devotion, nor acquire the respect, of the people, however they may honour his position or his office. His whole life and ministry, though it may flow smoothly, considered in a worldly point of view, will have the unhappy characteristic of violating the command of Christ, and disedifying the virtue of his people.

## 2. *Examples of Ecclesiastical Penance.*

Behold the example of St. Peter—after Jesus Christ the great priest and prince of the apostles—who did great penance during his whole life, and crowned it with his blood. His vocation was certain, for Christ chose him as one of the twelve. His graces were great and special, since he was called to the apostleship. His dignity was eminent and exalted, being the friend and confidant of his Divine Master, and

the future head of his Church. As all these great gifts and privileges did not save him from sin, so they did not free him from penance. Sorrow for his sin seized upon his soul, and his bitter tears, when he became conscious of his crime, were the first evidence of his profound grief.

David—king and priest—was the friend and favorite of heaven. His gifts were so sublime, that he was said to be a man after God's own heart. Having fallen into grievous sins, he thought his whole life too short for their expiation. In those penitential psalms which he sung to God, there is evidence of the austerities with which he afflicted his body, and of the profound grief and contrition with which his heart was torn. But penance and expiation had a higher subject than these, for they ascended the Cross. The Almighty Father, not satisfied with the internal grief of his Son, would also have corporal expiation; and hence our Lord, having no sin of his own, ascended on high for the sake of our sins, and gave up his life "with a loud cry and tears," making an infinite and universal expiation.

### 3. *On the means of doing Penance.*

Ecclesiastics should consider well how to lead a life of penance. Besides all the means common to the Christian state, such as grief and contrition of mind, accompanied by suffering and austerity of body, they have all these means which are peculiar to their ministry. The holy sacrifice of the Mass, which is a sacrifice of expiation, they should frequently offer to God, to satisfy for their sins. The tedious and

troublesome duty of the Confessional they should undergo in a spirit of penance, and the laborious task so repugnant to the feelings of nature of instructing the young and the ignorant, will be a sacrifice very pleasing to God. In a word, all the duties of the ministry, which are sometimes so severe, when rightly offered to God, will be matter for the expiation of our sins. Those evil passions, which unfortunately enter into the sanctuary, can be humbled and mortified, and the difficulties to be endured, and the labours to be gone through, may be made a continual penance and sacrifice, but the great sacrifice is from within, from the contrite and humble heart. Like your Divine Saviour who was covered and loaded with your sins, and who appeared so before his heavenly Father and the whole world, learn to suffer and to do penance in union with him, that you may avert the wrath which is enkindled against you, and satisfy in time all the demands of God's justice.

Resolve every day of your life to mortify your will and your body for the expiation of your sins.





## ON ST. PATRICK'S DAY.

"Non fecit taliter omni nationi."—PSALM cxlvii.

### 1. *On the faith of the Church of St. Patrick.*



HERE is one name which rejoices all hearts—there is one saint under whose invocation we all love to pray—there is one soul in Heaven, who watches continually over our Church and people—need we mention the name of Saint Patrick? What thoughts and ideas are excited by the mention of this holy name!

It brings to the mind the festival of this day, which is celebrated with so much solemnity. It fills the heart with gratitude and thanksgiving to God. It reanimates our languid and drooping faith. It exhorts us to a better and holier Christian life. It inspires us to emulate the past in the time to come, and it reminds us of the history of our Church, the fame of whose faith is in all lands, and which has been made memorable by her sufferings.

In the labours which St. Patrick undertook, he not only overthrow the ancient superstition—he not only established a Church which confessed God in purity and praise, and has ever since lived in faith, and grace, and wisdom; but he seems to have left to it, as some wonderful gift, an indefectible life—a power of continuance, which no obstacle has overthrown, either from without or within. God has given to it through his hands a continual mercy, a

long descended blessing; for not only did this Church profess the faith in her early youth, and in her primitive fervour, when she was the light and the example of the nations; but she has held to it in every time, and through every change, most of all when she was tried in the fire of tribulation. It has not been so with every nation. There were Churches founded by Apostles, whose lives were the light of all, and whose prayer was the prayer of the just, and there is not a vestige now of the faith they planted, nor of the work they left. There were Churches who witnessed the shedding of the martyrs' blood, who were visited and instructed by the great teachers, and enlightened and edified by the illustrious Confessors of the Church, and the most that can be said of them now is, that they once had been. There were also Churches which never lost the faith; still, there existed periods in their history when that faith was put in peril, where it lay as it were trembling in the balance, but thanks be to the Almighty God, whose ways are inscrutable, and whose mercies are without number, the faith that St. Patrick preached here centuries ago, remains uninjured and unbetrayed. There never has existed any period in our history, in which there was any doubt about the faith, as long as the people would survive to profess it, and no lapse of time, however great—no change, however continual—no fortune, though it varied much—no calamity, though it was terrible and pressing, could destroy that Church, which grew stronger as it grew older, and which became powerful in spite of oppression.

## 2. *Why the Church of St. Patrick never fell away.*

Many reasons have been assigned for the continuance of this Church. One of the first, and we believe the principal, was the devoted and exemplary life of its clergy. This Church was always blessed with a holy and laborious priesthood. It was therefore, that she gained the triumph in the deadly struggle, it was therefore that tribulation only developed her strength and power, and never exhibited her weakness or submission. Any Church, which has a good clergy, who are pure and holy, who are unselfish in their labours, and who are entirely devoted to their people, and not to themselves, that Church may well defy the arts of heresy, and the power of princes, but when any Church has a priesthood worthless and corrupted, sunk in self indulgence, and forgetful of its duty, then is it torn asunder with human passions, and when the enemy comes it falls an easy prey. This is evident from the history of the universal Church, from the Arian troubles, from the Greek schism, and from the so-called Reformation.

It is commonly stated as a historic truth, that the heretical principles of the Reformation, whatever might have been their success from other causes, never yet took root in any country, except where the unclerical and unpriestly lives of the clergy had first alienated the minds, and awakened the hatred of the people. Whenever there was a good clergy, having over their flocks their natural and legitimate influence, clergy and people alike were secure from the machinations of heresy, and the passions of men; but whenever the clergy were filled with that know-

ledge that puffeth up—whenever they were enervated and corrupted by temporal possessions, where they were proud, and haughty, and avaricious, and sensual, where they lost the sense of discipline, and the fear of God, then indeed was there shipwreck made of the faith of many, and the name of Jesus Christ was profaned among the nations. As Israel fell off from the house of Judah, so did these heretical nations, clergy and people, separate and fall away from the house of God. This is the lesson that history teaches.

3. *How the Church of St. Patrick is to be continued.*

From all this it would appear that there is required a priesthood devoted and virtuous, to keep alive and to transmit the deposit of the faith, and to hand over uninjured, and unimpaired, the rich inheritance which has been left us. To do this, priests have only to study the life, and to imitate the virtues of our illustrious apostle. Like the great saints, he excelled in all perfection, but there were some of his virtues which come out more prominently than the others, and therefore specially commend themselves to our attention and consideration. These were a profound humility, a love of seclusion, a desire for prayer, and an enlightened zeal for souls.

The humility of St. Patrick ecclesiastics should endeavour to imitate, because pride is no part of their life or profession, and because it is entirely repugnant to the Gospel principles which they teach.

A great love of retirement also distinguished our apostle. When not engaged in the duties of his

mission, he sought the seclusion of the house of God; he loved the silence of the holy place. How different is it with many ecclesiastics, who though they have succeeded to St. Patrick's ministry, have no love for his virtues—who are dissatisfied with seclusion and retirement, and who continually desire the pleasure and variety of the world. Moreover, we should enquire have we in any way the spirit of prayer which distinguished this apostle. Do we ever omit without any cause that important and necessary exercise? Is it a labour of love, or is it a duty of necessity?

The holy and enlightened zeal which animated the apostle should be continually before the minds of those who have to continue his work—not an ignorant zeal, pursuing and indulging our own passions, which we mistake for, and call, zeal—not “the bitter zeal” of which the apostle St. Paul speaks, and which was practised by the Pharisees, but a true zeal, “*secundam scientiam*,” springing from virtue, and enlightened by God in prayer.

Upon all the priests of the Church of St. Patrick there rests a heavy burden—there presses a serious and solemn responsibility; for, if they have not the virtues of St. Patrick, and of their holy ministry, unhappy and unfortunate was that day for the Church he founded, and the faith he left, when they assumed the vestments of the holy priesthood, and undertook the discharge of its solemn and dreadful functions. Would it not be a dreadful thing, if ever they should become idlers in that vineyard which they should cultivate—if they should become hirelings and mercenaries, when they should


be pastors, if they should become triflers and scoffers in the midst of all which our religion exhibits of what is most holy, and most venerable? Where would be the Church of our country—that which is our highest prize and most precious possession—if they who are bound to maintain it, should despise alike the divine law and the memories of the past, and become, unlike their predecessors, a worldly and degenerate priesthood?

Pray earnestly to St. Patrick that God would give you some of the virtue which he possessed, and some of the blessing which crowned his labours.

## ON THE VISITATION OF THE SCHOOLS.

“Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God.”—*MATT.*, xix, 14.

### 1. *Visitation of National Schools.*

HE Church, on account of her divine commission to watch over and to preserve the deposit of the faith, enters into the school, and cannot be kept out of it. One of her most important duties is discharged there. She not only provides for religious teaching, but she mingles with secular, so that it may guide and direct it. When this cannot be done, as in the case of National Schools, the Church then watches, with vigilance and care, over all secular education, however elementary it may be, that it be not conducted in a manner injurious to her interests, or to

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that treasure of the faith which she preserves. For the performance of these duties, the priest is frequently in the school. Not only is he present at the time in which he gives religious instruction, but it is also his duty to be there on other occasions, so that he may see that the secular instruction is not imparted in any way which the Church condemns, or which good Catholics dislike or disapprove of. He should therefore know the general character and religious views of the teachers. He should study their method or manner of imparting knowledge. He should examine the books from which instruction is given, and above all, he should carefully observe the general effect which their teaching has upon the religious character of their pupils.

In these schools which are not under the control of the Church this vigilance is more required, because if any evils would arise, it is in these that heresy, latitudinarianism, or indifference would most likely occur, openly destroying the precious portion of the flock, or secretly undermining the future prosperity of the Church of God.

Let us ask ourselves have we ever neglected these duties, or through our fault has a single child been lost to the faith of Christ.

## *2. Visitation of schools conducted by Religious.*

Even in these schools which are entirely in the hands of religious, and exclusively conducted by them, the presence of the priest is of great value and utility; nay it is of strict necessity. Not that the faith of the children is endangered in any way, but a vast degree of educational efficiency, and of

improvement in religious life and training, depend on the frequent presence of the priest, and on his active co-operation. His very appearance in it sanctifies, as it were, and blesses the house of education. His frequent coming shews to parents, and impresses upon the children, the importance of the business in which they are engaged. All the absent he can easily know, so that he may enquire the cause, and with regard to those present, he can learn all about their dispositions, their talents, and their moral life and conduct. It sometimes happens that cursing, lying, evil speaking, quarreling, prevail among the children, and whenever these vices arise, he should immediately endeavour to eradicate them, not only by exciting the vigilance and attention of the teachers with regard to them, but also by his personal efforts to root them out, and to destroy them by religious instruction. The simplicity of manners, and the purity and innocence of life which prevail so much amongst children, he should, by counsel and encouragement, endeavour to cultivate, and to develope. It is in this way that religion presides over secular instruction, to guide and to direct it, never allowing it to be an instrument of evil to the soul, but turning that which is one of God's greatest gifts, to the highest and holiest purposes.

### 3. *The importance and necessity of this Visitation.*

The exact discharge of this duty is of the greatest importance and necessity, for were it not attended to with the greatest care, the dearest interests of the Church are endangered for the time to come. The future welfare of the Church depends on the



growing generation. If they be neglected, whatever may be the character of their lives, it will be the same with the Church which they compose. Now, should any lose the true faith in which they were baptized, or, without separation from the Catholic Church, should any of them become indifferent to the Church their mother, disobedient or disrespectful to her pastors, careless or perhaps shameless in their manner of living, the responsibility then rests upon those priests who neglected to watch over their early education, and who did not profit by the greatest opportunity they could ever have, of impressing virtue and morality upon their tender minds. Those are the false pastors, who leave to others what they should do themselves, and who neglect and abandon the most precious interests of the Church of God, as if they were beneath the dignity and respect of their ministry.

Resolve to attend to this important duty for the sake of God, who so wishes it—to act as the father of the people, caring and providing for his spiritual children, to do his duty as the minister and representative of the Church who watches over this the most tender and the most precious portion of the flock, and finally to fulfil it in order that you may receive your reward from that God who has promised that “they shall shine as stars for ever, who instruct many unto justice.”

## ON ZEAL FOR SELF-PERFECTION.

“Attendite vobis et universo gregi.”—Acts, xx., 28.

### 1. *Obligation of self-perfection.*



THE advice of the apostle to the pastors of the Church implies that they should study their own sanctification, before they would apply their zeal to their people. The first charge upon the zeal of a priest is the care of his own soul. Nothing can compensate for its loss, even though he were in others the cause of much perfection. Were he to suffer in hell for all eternity, as far as he is concerned his labour on the earth may well be called useless, and he will be an example of the Scripture saying: “What doth it avail a man to gain the whole world if he lose his own soul.”

Moreover, his priestly office, and charge over the people, require and exact holiness. What our Saviour said of his Apostles, the priest should say of his people: “Pro eis ego sanctifico meipsum.” If he be not holy, his people will not be sanctified: “Sic populus, sic sacerdos.” He never can properly discharge the priestly functions without sanctity. How will he daily offer the adorable sacrifice if he be not all the Apostle requires: “sanctus, innocens, impollutus, segregatus a peccatoribus.” How will he direct souls in the confessional if his heart be not pure and his mind exalted? What instruction can be given to the people by him who is only “a sounding brass and a tinkling

cymbal." His priestly functions are void, and his daily life is a continual combat with his priestly character. No longer studying self-perfection he is a priest neither for himself nor for his people, but he is a priest, perhaps, for his pleasures, which occupy and consume his precious time, if they do not inflict further injury—or he is a priest for the indulgence of his passions, which brought him to the sanctuary where he should have never come—or he is a priest for his relations, whose vanity or cupidity have placed him upon the altar—a priest for anything but for God, whose servant he is, or for his own soul, which he is bound to save; in a word, he inflicts destruction on himself by his carelessness and impiety, and his ministry with the people is what the Old Law was after Christ's coming, "a ministration of death."

*2. In what this care of our own perfection consists.*

The study of self-perfection, and earnest labour to attain it, should in our minds take precedence of every study and labour. Though God has given us other charges, and requires from us the performance of other functions, still this, the care of our own soul, is the principal thing which God wishes us to study, and which he expects us to perform. It is the most important thing in the world which God has given us to do. Everything else is accessory and secondary to this great obligation.

We are to consider of the highest value every thing which concerns our own salvation. To secure this object, the means which we so frequently recommend to others we should take care to put in practice, such as prayer and meditation, examination of con-

science, daily mass, frequent confession, spiritual reading, adherence to our rule of life, and such like, that we may keep in our souls a fund of piety and devotion, and that we may live the "life hidden with Christ in God." We should not be content with attaining a certain degree of perfection, such as freedom from grievous sin, but we should endeavour to advance in virtue every day, never secure of ourselves, nor presuming upon the mercy of God : like the apostle, who though he had triumphed over his passions, and governed his own soul, still ran and struggled for the prize.

In the midst of our care and labour for others, perhaps the vineyard of our own soul is untilled and uncultivated. The talent which God has given us, for our own sanctification, may be buried in the earth, and the words of the apostle may be realized in us : "*Ne forte cum aliis prædicaverim ipse reprobus efficiar.*"



## ON THE REVERENCE AND RESPECT OF ECCLESIASTICS IN THE CHURCH OF GOD.

“ Oculi mei erunt aperti et aures meæ erectæ ad orationem ejus qui in loco isto oraverit.”—11 PAR., vii, 45.

### 1. *Obligations of Ecclesiastics to observe respect.*



IN the Ancient Law the Temple of Solomon was an imperfect type of the Christian Church. By the command of God the Jewish priests, while they remained or sacrificed in their Temple, observed the greatest reverence and respect. Nay, it was the expressed desire of the Almighty that a certain part of this Temple should be entered but once a year, and then only by the High Priest; such was the awe and reverence which God desired to infuse into all with regard to the house of his prayer, and the place of his worship. Since such was the respect and ceremony with which God surrounded the Temple of the Old Law, what must be the respect and reverence that he requires from the priests of the New Dispensation, whose Church contains all the reality of which the Jewish Temple had only the type and figure?

In this matter, our Saviour has given an example to all ecclesiastics to follow. Entering the Temple of his heavenly Father, he examined all things “omnibus circumspectis” to see that all were kept and ordered with the necessary decency and decorum

As soon as he beheld the traffickers and the money changers turning his Father's house, which was a house of prayer, into a den of thieves, seized with a holy indignation he forcibly ejected them from the Temple, and so far did he carry his zeal for the order and decency of God's house, that we are told in St. Mark "that he would not suffer even a vessel to be carried through the Temple." This conduct of our Divine Saviour is an example to all ecclesiastics, to be careful that in the house of God nothing disorderly or unbecoming should be found.

The Christian Temple is the house of God, the place of prayer, and the gate of heaven. It is the tabernacle of God with men, where he hears the cry of their distress, and pours out the fulness of grace and mercy. It is their paradise upon the earth. Surely ecclesiastics, who approach to God in this his mercy seat, will not by irreverence or contempt commit sin or iniquity in the holy place. In their celebration of the holy sacrifice, in the public offices of the Church, their whole conduct and manner will breathe a spirit of piety and devotion. Moreover, it will be impossible for ecclesiastics to enforce on the laity the due and necessary respect for God's house, if they be never seen to exhibit it themselves. How can they ask the laity to fulfil an obligation which they themselves should be the first to observe, and which they are the first to violate?

Above all, the Christian Temple contains in the tabernacle, the Holy of Holies, the living bread which came down from heaven, the great victim and propitiation for sin, the food and nourishment of holy

souls. Behold the great reason for the respect and reverence of all—for the fear and awe with which we approach the sanctuary of God. Had we eyes to see, we should behold the angels with their faces veiled in profound adoration before the holy tabernacle, and had we ears to hear we should hear the voice of God crying out: “*Locus iste terribilis est.*” *Pavete ad sanctuarium meum.*”

## 2. *On the want of this respect.*

It sometimes happens that ecclesiastics, on entering the Church, do not ask themselves whither they are going. They enter without consideration, and therefore without piety. One of the Councils laying down a rule for ecclesiastics in this matter (Conc. Rom. 1581) says, “*Sit ad ecclesiam humilis et devotus ingressus.*” They often walk in a disorderly and hurried manner through the Church, making the worst impression on the faithful of the piety and reverence which priests have for the house of God. In some instances, they do not uncover their heads, because the Blessed Sacrament happens not to be kept in the Church, and to the crucifixes, images and statues in the Church they make no reverence nor salutation. Perhaps the minister of God laughs, where others weep. Perhaps he walks about conversing, when others are humbled on their knees. He turns his eyes on every side around, when there are some there who are afraid to lift up their eyes to heaven. How can the priest impress respect and veneration for the Temple of God on the hearts of the people if he do not give an example of it himself?

The Church of God is no place for worldly conversation. It never should be made a passage of for the sake of convenience. Our Saviour would not suffer a vessel to be carried through the Temple. No business should be transacted in the house of God except it were of a spiritual nature. The house of God is no place for levity, or impropriety, or indecorum—that house which is filled with the peculiar power and presence of God, before whose greatness there the children of men come to lay their weakness, and to acknowledge their infirmities, and whose majesty, veiled in the Tabernacle, the angels praise, the dominations adore, and the powers tremble before.

### 3. *On the means of observing this respect.*

Never enter into the Church of God without considering well where you are going. Taking the holy water and signing yourself with the sign of the Cross, make a short act of contrition for your sins, and having saluted the Blessed Sacrament with great reverence and devotion, pray to our Lord that you may never want, during your ministry, the respect which is due to Him and to his holy house.

Since ecclesiastics are so often in the Church, they should make frequent acts of faith in the presence of God and of his holy angels, so that their constant use of, and intercourse with, holy things, and their continual presence in the Temple, would not lessen their faith and piety; and that familiarity would in no way engender indifference or contempt.

Lastly, they should frequently impress upon the faithful the obligation of veneration and respect in




the house of God. If they do so, they cannot but observe it themselves, and thereby increase the success and efficiency of their ministry. To these holy priests, who thus honour the majesty of God in his holy house, Christ will not utter the reproach which he addressed to others: "I honour my Father and you have dishonoured me."

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## ON PREPARING THE CHILDREN FOR FIRST COMMUNION.

"Curet parochus ne parentum negligentia priventur amplius hujus spiritualis thesauri participatione."—ST. CHARLES BORROMEO.

### 1. *Its importance and necessity.*

HE day on which children receive their first communion is one of the happiest and most important of their lives. It is the festival day which they never forget, for every circumstance connected with it is engraven upon their minds. Upon their good dispositions on that day will depend in a great degree the future of their religious life. The work which they have to do is great indeed, for a "house is prepared not for man but for God." Were the preparation made by them for so important a work good and holy, God would come to dwell in them, and they would commence their religious life under the most happy auspices.

On the other hand, were they to receive their Saviour in a state of ignorance, or sin not having

duly prepared for so great a guest, they would not discern the body of the Lord, and they would eat and drink damnation to themselves. What a beginning would this be in their tender years, and what could be hoped in the future from such a rash and wicked commencement? Hence the obligation on the priest of preparing them for so excellent a work by every means in his power. He should endeavour to have the parents, and the teachers of the children, take the warmest interest in this important preparation. He should encourage and stimulate the zeal of the children themselves. The priest should spare neither pains nor labour to instruct their minds, and to excite their piety; and when that blessed day comes on which they are to taste of the heavenly gift, it should be his endeavour to make the ceremony itself an impressive spectacle, surrounded with all the beauty and majesty of religion, so that not only will the children be affected, but it will be an edification to their parents, and to all who witness it.

How often have we been careless and negligent in this important preparation of the children?

## *2. How the preparation is to be made.*

The first thing required in children preparing for their first communion, is that they be properly instructed. They should therefore learn from their infancy, all that the catechism contains, and it is not enough, that they have it by heart, they should also understand, at least the necessary and important points, and be able to explain them, when required.

To bring about this desirable result in the minds of

the children, the parents, the teachers, and the priests, must be in one accord—labouring for the same common end. The parents should endeavour to make the children apply to their catechism when at home, and on every occasion possible they should send them to the Church, and to the school, where they may be taught. The parents should be exhorted to this by the priest. While they are in the school at catechism, the design of the person instructing there, should be, not only to make them learn the catechism by heart, but also to understand what they learn, and the priest in the Church will explain to them in his catechetical instruction, all which their youthful minds should know concerning the mysteries of religion, the value and efficacy of the sacraments, and the duties and obligations of the Christian life. He should not confine himself only to the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, but his instruction should embrace the whole range of Christian doctrines. After instruction, the next thing required for First Communion is actual virtue, and the great means to form the children and to mould them to virtue, which the priest has in his hands, is the sacrament of Penance.

Being well instructed in the dispositions, nature, and value of this sacrament, the children should be invited to come to it frequently, and it is here that the great work of the priest has to be performed. He must be kind and patient in these frequent confessions. He must excite in them a horror of sin, and a love for virtue. If they have acquired habits of sin, not only will he oblige them to renounce it, and to make a total change of life, but he will invite them, if he deem it necessary, to make a general

confession of their whole life. It is in this way, by continual advice and instruction, in the confessional and by frequent confession and absolution of their sins, that he will lift up their minds to the Almighty God, and unite them to him in prayer and charity, and dispose them to receive well their divine Saviour who is about to be their guest.

Lastly, this solemn and holy ceremony should be preceded by great prayer for its success. First of all, the children should be taught to ask continually this great and good gift from God—the grace of a worthy First Communion. Knowing how much depends on this most solemn act of religion, the priest himself should send up constant petitions for its success. The parents of the children who are to receive should also ask this favour from God, so that their children, beginning their religious life well, may continue in the grace and friendship of God, and in those principles of religion which they have learned. The Sunday preceding the ceremony, the priest might ask the prayers of the whole congregation in behalf of the first communicants, that while they receive this divine food, the body and the blood of the living God, they might also receive and retain his heavenly influence, and be participators in his spirit and graces.

Finally, when the blessed day arrives on which they are to be made happy by the coming of their Divine Guest, and when they have received their Saviour with the greatest sentiments of piety and devotion, the priest will then recite aloud, all repeating it with him, a solemn public act of thanksgiving for so great a blessing. The children will then renew their baptismal vows in the presence of God,

and the priest will give to each of them, with expressions of encouragement and affection, a little card or medal of their First Communion, as a memento of their piety and of their promises to God, and of the great happiness which they experienced on that blessed day. Then all singing a little hymn to their patroness, the Blessed Virgin, may depart in peace.

Examine yourselves to see have you taken these pains in this important preparation, and whether you have neglected in any particular these little children, who are the hope and the promise of the house of God, and the most precious portion of the Pastor's flock.

## ON ECCLESIASTICAL CEREMONIES.

“Omnia honeste et secundum ordinem fiant.”—1 COR. xiv., 40.

### 1. *Their necessity and utility.*



O form of religion, true or false, has ever yet existed without ceremonies of some kind. The necessity for them is founded upon the nature of man, who requires sensible signs to lift up his mind to the contemplation of heavenly things. Hence false religions have their ceremonies, which are either impious or superstitious.

In the Mosaic Dispensation, God wished to be adored not merely with the homage of the mind, but also by means of these external ceremonies, which explained his mysteries, and signified and symbolised

his adoration. Accordingly, in his wisdom God himself prescribed for the Jews, in the service of their Temple, all their rites and ceremonies, with all the pomp and splendour which was suitable for his public worship, so useful did he think it for the interests of religion, and so necessary did he deem it for the condition of the people. "Keep the precepts," said He, "and ceremonies which I command thee this day. Beware lest at any time, thou forget the Lord, and neglect his commandments and ceremonies." (Deut., vii. 11; viii. 11.)

If God, in this matter of sacred ceremonies, required so much exactness in the Mosaic Law, which was but a shadow and a type of the Law to come, what will he not require in the New Law, which is the substance of the shadow, and the reality of the type? The difference between the two dispensations in this respect is, that God himself prescribed these ceremonies in the Old Law and set them forth in all their detail, while in the New Law he has done it through his Church, guided by his spirit and directed by his wisdom.

It is true that, in the Christian Law, God is interiorly "adored in spirit and in truth," and that his kingdom consists in justice and sanctity, and peace of the Holy Spirit." Yet, notwithstanding this, God, far from excluding rites and ceremonies, displays and appoints them through his Church as auxiliary and subservient to interior adoration. God desires to explain to the minds of the people, by means of these sensible signs, the great mysteries which they honour, and to give them an opportunity of manifesting through them, as suitable to their condition

the faith and feelings of their hearts. In this view some of the Councils style these sacred ceremonies "imagines fidei, incitamenta pietatis, signacula religionis."

In the use of these sacred ceremonies let us understand the meaning which they represent and symbolize, so that they may be the occasion to us of producing higher and more perfect acts of interior worship.

*2. On the respect and devotion with which they should be observed.*

The functions which priests perform, and the mysteries which they celebrate by means of sacred ceremonies, are so holy in themselves, and so sublime, that they should never be performed without the greatest respect and devotion. In the celebration of the holy sacrifice, in the administration of the sacraments, and in the public offices of the Church, nothing light or unbecoming, nothing indecent or undignified should appear. The priest upon the altar represents our Saviour, and were he to appear again in the flesh, with what piety, and gravity, and devotion he would celebrate the heavenly mysteries?

Moreover, the edification of the faithful imperatively requires that the ministers of God should perform their functions with the respect and devotion which become their holy and exalted nature, because, were anything indecorous or unbecoming allowed to appear, the faithful would behold the sacred ceremonies of the Church profaned, instead of being honoured, and the object which the Church

had in view in their institution would be entirely defeated.

In the discharge of these sacred functions it is not enough to fulfil them with exactness, they should be also observed with devotion. Some ecclesiastics may have a natural taste and aptitude for sacred ceremonies, and on that account fulfil them with great exactness, although they have no piety whatsoever. The true priest of God will have more holy and exalted views with regard to these functions, by which God is immediately honoured, and through which the highest acts of religion and worship are performed. He will minister to God, not merely with his lips or with his external acts of homage, but all his functions will be performed with the greatest piety and devotion, so that he may serve and "adore God in spirit and in truth."

Examine yourselves to see do you know and put in practice all the ceremonies of the Church which the Rubrics require, and in the manner prescribed. Ask yourselves do you perform them with that exactness and devotion which will make them honorable to the Almighty God, and useful to the people

### 3. *Defects in the observance of Sacred Ceremonies.*

It is a sad and an humbling thing to behold a priest of God upon the altar go through the sacred and venerable mysteries with a hurry and precipitation which do not become the most sublime rites of religion, and which must lessen and degrade them in the eyes of the people. The holy sacrifice celebrated in this manner must produce an unhappy effect, for the people will necessarily think little of the faith and



devotion of the priest, and of the respect which he, the minister of God, has for the sacred and heavenly mysteries. The priest who acts in this improper manner pretends that his motive is to avoid exciting the tedium and impatience of his people, while the real reason is to acquire the character of a quick and expeditious minister in his public functions. Great and good God ! Thou formerly punished in the ancient law those priests who neglected thy precepts, and violated thy commands, in the worship of thy temple, with the most signal and instant marks of thy heavenly justice, and it is thy mercy alone that suspends the punishments of those priests of the New Law, who come dissipatedly and distractedly into thy holy sanctuary, and who hurry as it were mechanically through the most sublime and exalted rites of religion. Not in this impious and careless manner do holy priests celebrate these solemn rites, for they go through them, having their minds and thoughts wrapped up in the contemplation of these heavenly mysteries, and oftentimes shedding tears of piety and devotion.

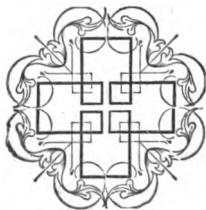
In the holy sacrifice, celebrated in this improper manner, some of the words must necessarily be omitted. Other words, though not entirely omitted, are not fully pronounced, and all are hurried over without that air of external respect and piety in which the priest should be absorbed, and which so much edifies the people.

The chanting of the Office of the Dead is sometimes performed in a careless, desultory, manner. This is one of the most beautiful and touching ceremonies in the Catholic Ritual, and when properly

performed, is highly impressive and devotional. Ecclesiastics, who are engaged in this most solemn function, should always endeavour to conduct it in a manner which will edify and impress all who see and hear them.

It sometimes happens that priests will refuse to take part in the ceremonies of the solemn Mass for the Dead, giving as an excuse, that they do not know them. This is an humbling thing for a priest to say, that he does not know the first duties of his office; and were he induced to officiate at the High Mass, it may be that he would turn one of the most impressive solemnities in our religion into a disedifying and a disgraceful spectacle.

Give us, O Lord, a love for the ceremonies of thy holy house. Make us know and fulfil them in a spirit of interior piety, and in an external edification of the Church of God.



## ON THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE.

"Credo in remissionem peccatorum."—SYM. APOS.

1. *The high esteem which confessors should have for their office.*



HERE is no office more elevated than that of the confessor. There is nothing more useful for souls than the Sacrament of Penance. Consider therefore the great and high esteem which we should have for it.

The priest in the holy tribunal is a judge appointed by Jesus Christ to dispense his heavenly justice. He is to decide between God and the sinful soul. It is not on the body, nor on the life of man, nor on the passing interests of this world, that he is to give judgment, but on the life of the soul and on the question of salvation. His power is proportionate to his office, for, as his judgment directs, he opens or shuts, he binds or looses, he absolves or retains, and whatever be his judgment on the earth it is ratified in heaven.

The priest in the holy tribunal is also a heavenly physician. He is enabled to comfort the drooping spirit, and to cure the wounded soul. With the greatest care he prescribes all the remedies for spiritual sickness. Nay, such is his power, that he restores to life those who are spiritually dead, inasmuch as he washes away the stains of sin which are the cause of death.

The priest in the confessional discharges the office of doctor or teacher. It is there that the poor and ignorant are properly instructed in the saving principles of eternal life. There is many a soul which never hears instruction given in the Church, or when it is given, does not understand it. It is only in the confessional that such a soul can learn what is necessary for salvation, or for her peculiar condition of life.

The priest in the tribunal is also a saviour, for he continues and applies the great work of salvation. Jesus Christ offered up himself the great victim for the sins of the world; and, it is in the confessional that the priest chiefly applies to the soul the merits of that infinite victim; and, by applying, gives effect and brings to perfection in the human heart the great sacrifice which was offered on the Cross.

The priest also holds the place of Jesus Christ, and, as it were, resembles God, because he here exercises the divine power and authority, and is, as it were, clothed with the majesty of God. No power, except it be of heaven, can forgive sin, "*quis potest dimittere peccata solus nisi Deus.*" No one, except he be invested with heavenly authority can confer grace. This is a power not conferred upon the angels, and yet the priest in the confessional forgives sin, and infuses grace into the soul, which shews that he exercises a function which was denied to the virtue of the angels, and which also proves that this ministry is most elevated and sublime, and is, as it were, quite divine.

*2. The manner of discharging that office well.*

Since the office of confessor is so elevated and sublime, and the consequences which flow from its proper exercise so important and valuable for souls, it becomes the duty of every confessor to discharge it well. For this purpose he should bring to it great care and zeal, and most particular application. He passes judgment there upon souls. He dispenses in the confessional the Holy Spirit which God as it were has put into his hands. The words of truth and justice are upon his lips, and therefore it is, that the greatest care, and the most enlightened zeal, should guide and animate this duty.

The priest is also there as a saviour, continuing and applying the great work of redemption to the souls of men, and this is the reason why he should exhibit there the qualities and characteristics of our Divine Saviour, inasmuch as he holds his place and exercises his authority.

The priest should be animated with great charity, as Our Saviour manifested a great charity for all, and a special affection for sinners.

He should also exercise in the confessional the patience of Jesus Christ—patience towards ignorance and sin—and he should never forget the great patience with which our Lord treated the woman who was taken in adultery, forgiving her sin and sending her away in peace.

Humility also should fill the heart of the confessor. Although he discharges the most elevated duty, and acts in the name, and with the authority of God, he should always remember that he is himself subject

to weakness, and sin, and were it not for the hand of God, and for his sustaining grace, he might become a vessel of iniquity, and a child of wrath, like the very worst of the sinners whom he absolves.

Finally, as the priest is there in the confessional for the sake of God, as he speaks in his name and is clothed with his authority, he should have no other design to serve, no other interest to carry out, no other passion to gratify, but the interests of God who has placed him there, and the good of the people for whom he has been made a priest.

Have we ever heard confessions from any other motive but that of honoring God, and serving the people? Have we ever manifested our pride and impatience in the tribunal of heavenly mercy? Have we laboured there from motives of vanity, pleased to see the tribunal surrounded with rich and educated people, or worse than all, has avarice ever filled our mind and directed our labour?


Let us entreat the Almighty God to enable us to discharge this most important and practical duty in the same way as Jesus Christ himself would fulfil it, were He now upon the earth.



## ON THE CARE OF THE SICK:

“Infirmus eram et visitasti me.”—**MATT. xxv. 36.**

### 1. *Its great importance.*

HE priest, whose mission is one of charity and mercy, is in his proper place by the bed of sickness. The care of the sick is one of the most elevated and touching duties of his ministry. In that he closely resembles Jesus Christ, the pastor of souls, and the lover of the sick and poor. As we know from the Sacred Scripture, our Divine Saviour wept over the tomb of Lazarus his friend: so does the priest also lament over the sorrows of the sick and the afflicted. When our Saviour heard of the miseries of the centurion, touched with compassion he hastened to his house: so also does the priest, full of pastoral care and zeal, and with his heart always alive to the sufferings and miseries of his flock, hasten to the bed of sickness, to cure, to comfort, and to sanctify. It is here, by the bed of the sick and dying, that the priest most assumes a heavenly character, and brings down consolation from God. It is here that he pours out the most consoling influences of the Holy Spirit, giving comfort and consolation to afflicted hearts. His character of the good Samaritan comes out here most forcibly, for he binds up the wounds of sickness, and, when he is able, he relieves with the open hand of charity, their

temporal necessities. The salvation of the dying soul depends on these visits of the priest, and if they be well made, all is right for eternity.

## 2. *Its strict obligation.*

Consider well that the care of the sick is one of the strictest duties of the pastor. On this subject, the Roman Ritual says "*Parochus imprimis meminisse debet non postremas esse muneris sui partes ægrotantium curam habere.*" The Synod of Thurles lays down: "*Diligenti etiam et frequenti visitationi ægrorum provideant*" and the Statutes of the Province of Dublin, describing the pastor's obligations, says, "*infirmos visitent.*" Hence we see how strict the laws of the Church are with regard to this duty. This desire and anxiety of the Church to have the priest visit the sick is in no way wonderful, because it is during the time of sickness the priest will have the best opportunity of doing good. When the body is reduced by suffering, and the mind turned to God in affliction, the soul is then more disposed to hearken to the summons of repentance, and yield to all the inspirations of grace and mercy. The words of benediction which fall from the lips of the priest have then tenfold power, and the Church desires that he should be there to say them.

St. Liguori says, "at the moment of death, on which depends eternity, the power of evil spirits is greater, whilst the strength of the sick is less considerable." Behold another reason why the priest should be at the couch of sickness, to prevent the devils from seizing on their victim, and to hinder the sinful soul from the impulse of despair. The



sick should learn from him to turn their sufferings into penance and expiation, and to bear with joy and merit the afflictions sent by the Almighty God. Above all, the presence of the priest is most required when death approaches, so that purifying the soul and leading her as it were to the portals of eternity, he may give her up to God and reap the full harvest and fruit of his labours.

### 3. *The manner of discharging this obligation.*

When the priest learns that one of his flock is seriously ill he ought at once to visit the sick person. This is the advice of St. Charles Borromeo, "*Parochus non expectabit dum ab ægroto vocetur sed ipse ultro ad illum veniet;*" and when he is invited to attend by the sick person, he should proceed to see him without any unnecessary delay. It sometimes happens that the priest is called when there is no occasion whatsoever for his coming, or he may be invited to minister the sacraments that the sick poor may have an opportunity of asking temporal relief. Notwithstanding that some of these unnecessary calls will sometimes come, it may be better, all things considered, to make some useless journeys, than to omit one which would be necessary for the salvation of any soul. The rule of the parish in this matter should be always followed, still, if there were any departure from it, it should be in favour of the sick and of the afflicted.

An important point in this matter, worthy the consideration of every priest, is, that after the sick person has received all the sacraments, he is not then and therefore to be abandoned, and be never again


visited by the priest. On the contrary, if the priest could, he should see him every day while he is in danger, and were not this in his power he should visit him as often as convenience would allow. The more the sick person suffers and approaches the final moment, the more need has he from the priest of succour and consolation. The oftener the priest is with him the oftener he can receive absolution. It sometimes happens, that the formal integrity of confession is not observed until the last moment, and then it is of the utmost importance that the priest should be there. Every visit of the priest is a fresh occasion to the sick of renewing greater grief for their sins, of having more confidence in God, of being more conformable to his holy will, and of being resigned and patient in the midst of their sufferings. The holiest consolations and the dearest marks of his mercy, which God gives the sufferers on this earth, are in the visit of the priest.

Examine yourselves on this great obligation of the visitation of the sick. Have you neglected to visit the poor whom you despised, or have you left them to die after one short visit when you could visit them very often? Has any one ever died without the sacraments through your neglect? If these be your faults remember that one day God will say to you: "*Quod infirmum fuit, non consolidastis, et quod ægrotum non sanastis, et quod confractum non alligastis.*"

## ON ALL SAINTS' DAY.

"Beati qui habitant in domo tua Domine in Sæcula Sæculorum  
landabunt te."—PSAL. lxxxiii., 5.

### 1. *On the happiness of the Saints in Heaven.*



THE Church of God on this festival contemplates the great vision of sanctity, which St. John records. "I saw," said he, "a great multitude standing before the throne." He there beheld in vision the saints of God in the enjoyment of their happiness—those saints who overcoming the world and themselves, triumphing over all their enemies, follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. As God was their desire upon the earth, so his possession constitutes their happiness in heaven. Of that happiness of the saints we can have no perfect idea. St. Paul obtained, even while on the earth, some little foretaste of that great enjoyment. He says that he was wrapped up to the third heaven, that he was ravished away in an ecstasy of God, and heard there secret words, which are not given to man to utter. The same apostle, speaking of the happiness of heaven, admitting our weak and finite comprehension, says, that our senses never felt, nor our minds never conceived any thing like this happiness.—"Neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what things God hath prepared for those who love him." God Himself, in all the attri-

butes of his glory, constitutes their happiness, and of God we can have no perfect idea, so that their happiness is much greater than what we can conceive or comprehend. We have on the earth but feeble rays of God's splendour—we have but indistinct reflections and emanations of the divine glory, but it is in heaven where he is the delight of the saints, that he is truly magnificent, “Solummodo in cœlo magnificus est.” Not only is God there in greatness and splendour, but he is there in all kind of good—the saints possessing all manner of good in him. Neither evil, nor sorrow, exist there. God has “wiped away the tear from every eye.” Truth reigns in all things, charity guides and directs, and unites all. The measure of the happiness of the saints is that it has no measure. There occurs no change, nor vicissitude, nor cessation. These holy saints, happy in the contemplation of God, and inebriated with the torrent of his pleasure, live for ever in the light of this eternal day.

Let us endeavour to realise and to desire this great happiness of the saints of God.

*2. On the difficulties of the saints in attaining this happiness.*

Of all the saints, who repose in the heavenly happiness above, there is hardly one of them who had not to contend against some human passion or infirmity. Were any to be exempt it would appear to be Elias, who was taken up to heaven before he paid the debt due to the original disobedience; and yet we are told in the Scripture that Elias was like ourselves, subject to human passion and infirmity.

This should be our encouragement, that every one of these saints of God had some passion to overcome, or some infirmity to subdue, and it was in overcoming and subduing these passions that they became saints, and shewed their co-operation with the divine graces.

St. Paul was a great saint and servant of God. He was a vessel of election, and yet he had to contend against and to subdue the emotions of a violent and passionate nature. St. Mary Magdalen had too great sensibility and affection for creatures, but when she co-operated with the grace of conversion, this affection formerly given to creatures, she directed to her Saviour. The early days of St. Augustine were spent in vice and wickedness, yet when he was touched with that grace, of which he afterwards became so great a teacher, God no longer remembered the sins and iniquities of his youth. The good thief upon the cross had lived a life of crime. His sins were as numerous as the years, or as the days of his life, and in his last moments, when he repented of his sins, God admitted him to his eternal kingdom.

All this should be our consolation and encouragement, because we see that heaven is full of persons, who had passions and infirmities common to our human nature, and that there is no obstacle to our happiness which like these saints we cannot overcome,

3. *On the means used by the saints to attain this happiness.*

Consider that we have in our hands the same means exactly that the saints made use of, and

therefore that we should follow their example in endeavouring to attain the happiness of heaven. God is not less liberal nor less merciful to us than to them. The mercies of God are without number. The blood of our Saviour flowed for us as well as for them, and, as they had, so have we all the graces of the Sacraments, which are not fruitless, if they be not made so. It was by the continual practice of the ordinary means of salvation that the saints arrived at that perfection which should be the object of our imitation. Look at the lives of those great priests and ecclesiastics who were in the same state in which you are now. See to what a great degree they carried ecclesiastical perfection. They were so detached from the world that they never desired to leave the comparative seclusion in which they lived. They loved the order and discipline of God's house, not merely on account of temporal convenience, but also because of the supernatural value and assistance to be derived from their observance. They thought they never could sufficiently obey those statutes, or ordinances, or rules, which God in his wisdom laid down to regulate their time, and to determine their conduct. They were patient, and pure, and humble, and modest, and loving; so much so, that the waters of tribulation could not extinguish their charity. They were familiar with suffering, and oppressed with labour. Their lives were lives of sacrifice and of unselfishness; they were lovers of God's law, full of faith and prayer, ardent witnesses and preachers of the gospel in which they believed, and oftentimes victims for that religion which they loved so well.

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This perfection of the saints was attained by the very means which we have at present in our hands. In some respects, we may be in a better condition than many of the saints were. Many a saint, living in the midst of that world "which is seated in sin and wickedness," had to work out his salvation in fear and trembling. You have all the advantages of the seclusion and retirement of the College or the Presbytery. Many a saint, on account of the difficulties he was placed in, could neither hear nor say Mass. You can offer up Mass every day, or you can hear it with piety and devotion. Many a saint was surrounded with the incentives to vice and the attractions of sin. You see nothing around you but piety and virtue, and good example. Many a saint lived in the midst of that corruption which infects society, and was a witness of the disorder that generally prevails. You have every day the order and the discipline of the house of God to point out to you the right way, and to bring you up and to form you to the most perfect virtue.


Resolve to be no longer insensible to these blessings and advantages—shew that you appreciate them by corresponding with them well, and from this day forward, let the object of your life be, the attainment of the happiness of the saints of God.



## ON THE PRIEST'S DUTY OF DOMICILIARY VISITATION.

“*Desidero videre vos ut aliquid impertiar vobis gratiæ spiritualis ad confirmandos vos.*”—ROM. i., 11, 12.

### 1. *It is a Pastoral function.*

HE visit of the parish is here considered as a pastoral function. Our Lord describing the qualities of the good pastor, stated that he should know his sheep, and they should know him. “I am,” says he, “the good shepherd, I know mine and mine know me.” Now this mutual knowledge between pastor and people, so necessary for the salvation of souls, is best promoted by the parochial visitation, and that is especially true in those parishes where the stations are no longer held in private houses, but in the Church of God.

The prophet Ezekiel, announcing the word of the Lord, laments the neglect of those evil pastors who minded no one but themselves, and the ruin they brought upon their scattered flocks, and says that in the midst of these evils the Almighty God, the great shepherd of souls, will himself seek his sheep and visit them. “Behold, I myself will seek my sheep, and will visit them.” This is the model for all priests, who in the spirit of the Almighty God, seeking the lost, the miserable, and the fallen, and after the example of Jesus Christ, the good shepherd should, when



occasion or necessity arise, seek their people that they may heal their wounds, and discover their necessities.

*2. The advantages of this visitation.*

The priest has no better way of coming to the personal knowledge of his flock, than this method of visitation. After making two or three visits, he knows the heads of the families, and he begins to acquire a knowledge even of the children. As he represents the person and character of Jesus Christ among the people, they are pleased to see him, and are ready to lay before him all their spiritual necessities. Were his visitation made on the day in which they were obliged to attend to their Christmas or Easter obligations, the priest would be in a position to know who were present at Confession, and who were absent. This in itself is a great advantage to the priest, and it also turns out as a great advantage to the people. His visit will be of great profit to the children, because he can know if they be left and abandoned in a state of gross ignorance. If, however, they receive any education, he can learn the nature of it, and whether or not it is a Catholic education, such as they ought to receive. Their attendance at catechism, either in the Church or school, will be made known to him, and he will be also told of their preparation for, or their reception of, the holy sacraments of First Confession and Communion, which convey so much grace to their souls, before the wickedness of the world, or the habits of vice, would have taken possession of their hearts.

Moreover, the visitation enables the priest to know the good and evil of his parish. If any quarrels

or dissensions exist, he has a good opportunity to heal them. If any abuse prevail, he can find out the cause, and apply the remedy. Sometimes there will be bad parents: the priest has then the means of advising them to give good example to their children, and to their household. Were the children wicked or disobedient: he can tell them that to obey their parents, is to obey God. Thus the priest after bringing the peace of God into the house, and after having performed there by instruction, by edification, and by his kind and gracious words, some of the first duties of his ministry, leaves it with the friendship and with the blessing of the people.

### 3. *On the manner of this visitation.*

This parochial visit should be made by the priest with great piety, as he holds the place of our Saviour who watched over, and visited his flock, and with all disinterestedness, never looking for money, or speaking about it, but seeking only the things of Jesus Christ. On these occasions, prudence and mildness should especially distinguish the pastor. This parochial visit, being as it were official, should never degenerate into a visit of ceremony, or compliment. It never should become useless—a visit made to eat or to drink, to hear or to give news—to speak idle words in company, perhaps, which does not become the gravity or the sanctity of the priest of God or the pastor of souls. Instead of being useless or sinful, this visit is made for the purpose of giving instruction and edification, of acquiring the confidence and esteem of the people, and of fortifying them,

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especially the sick and the poor, with the promises and consolations which religion bestows.

Above all, there should be no "acceptatio personarum." Were there any exception made, it should be in favour of the old and the infirm, and those who have most need of conversion. This was the manner in which our Lord acted when he visited and stayed in the house of a sinner that he might convert him to God. He invited Zacheus to come down in haste, and that he would stay in his house.

Is this the way in which we act? Have we ever made such a visitation, or rather have we not made visits which were idle, and useless, and dangerous?


Resolve, if at all practicable in the parish, to make a domiciliary visitation, that you may know the morals and acquire the confidence of your people.



## ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS.

“Providentes bona non tantum coram Deo sed etiam corum hominibus.”—ROM. xii., 17.

### 1. *The dignity of the function.*



THE Sacraments are the channels of God's graces, and the proofs of God's mercy to his people. They are wonderfully adapted to our spiritual wants, because all that men require in this way are supplied by them. These seven sacraments provide for the spiritual birth, strength, cure, food, sanctification, conversion and perseverance of every Christian. All our justice begins, and when lost is restored through them. If then the sacraments, which are the heavenly instruments and channels of grace, be so great and holy, how great and exalted is the office of those who administer them, and who are called by Jesus Christ “the dispensers of the mysteries of God?” Priests are the guardians, and administrators, of these heavenly treasures. Now, in an earthly court, the office of keeper and dispenser of the royal treasure is of the highest consideration, and has the closest relations with the sovereign; much more excellent and important is the office of priest, who dispenses in the sacraments to the faithful the greatest treasures of God.

### 2. *On the manner of their administration.*

Consider well, that the administration of the

sacraments is one of the principal functions of the holy office of the priest, and that therefore he should bring to this duty the holiest dispositions, and the greatest perfection. Everything necessary, or useful, concerning the sacraments, the priest should know, such as their nature, their effects, the fruits which they produce in souls, and the dispositions required for their worthy reception, otherwise the priest will not be able to explain them, when giving instruction to the people, or teaching the catechism to the children. These heavenly treasures should not be in the hands of him who is ignorant of their spiritual value, and of the riches of God which they contain.

Moreover, the sacraments can never be properly administered, if the priest do not fully and perfectly know the ceremonies which the Church prescribes in their administration. Hence the necessity for the priest of frequently and constantly studying them, and even if the Statutes or Conferences of the Diocese did not provide for their frequent revision, it should be his constant care to know them with accuracy, so that he may not displease Almighty God at the very time when he is the medium of conferring his grace and mercy. Sacraments which are administered carelessly, irreverently, or in violation of the rubrics, dishonour the Almighty God whose marks of mercy they are, and scandalize the faithful, whom they are intended to sanctify and to console.

The great disposition required in a priest who administers the sacraments is to be in a state of grace and sanctity. When administering the sacra-

ments, were he in the state of grievous sin, although he might be the salvation of others, he would be the ruin of himself. One of the Councils says: "*Sit parochus ab omni labe peccati lethalis alienus, ne dum aliorum quærit salutem seipsum condemnet.*"

In the administration of the sacraments, not only is the enormous and terrible crime of their profanation to be avoided, but the priest should also purify his intention, and endeavour to have these holy dispositions which will make the sacrament useful to the receiver and to himself. Above all, the mind of the priest should be free from anything like avarice. It is a great sin to let a soul perish for whom Christ died, or even to allow a person to continue in grievous sin for a longer time than he otherwise would, because he is unable to comply with the pecuniary demands made upon him. It is an utter falling away from the spirit and elevation of our ministry to give the administration of the sacraments a mercenary turn or character.

Closely connected with the decent and respectful administration of the sacraments, is the proper care of the sacred vessels, because if they be not in a condition suitable to the holy nature and exalted character of the sacraments, any administration made from them is irreligious and disrespectful. Hence, in the sacrament of Baptism, priests should take care that the Baptismal Font, and the water which it contains be clean and pure, otherwise the sacrament of Baptism cannot be reverentially administered. In the same way, the greatest care is to be exhibited with regard to the chalices, ciboriums, pixes, holy oil

vessels, interior of the tabernacles, safes in which the Blessed Sacrament is kept, so that nothing may in any way appear which does not become the holiness of these heavenly mysteries, and the great reverence which is due to them.


Examine yourselves to see what account you can give of your stewardship. Ask yourselves have you ever administered these holy things with a contempt which is dreadful. Have you applied all the attention and fervour in their administration which these holy sacraments deserve? Above all, have you taken care to administer them with a conscience free from all grievous sin, so that your ministry was pure and acceptable to God, and that you were found faithful in this important work? If you have offended in any of these things, ask pardon of the Almighty God, and endeavour to turn away his anger. Resolve in future to be "the faithful dispenser" in the house of God of these heavenly treasures, and to administer with purity and reverence those holy sacraments, which God has put into your hands for the benefit of his people.



## ON THE OBEDIENCE OF ECCLESIASTICS TO THEIR SUPERIORS.

“Corde volenti, lætanti facie, veloci opere.”—ST. BERNARD.

### 1. *In what this obedience consists.*



HIS obedience is commonly stated to be a virtue which makes us comply with the orders of our superiors in all matters which pertain to their jurisdiction. It consists in esteeming and paying honour to their persons, always respecting them and everything which they prescribe in their capacity of superior. This virtue requires that ecclesiastics should never speak of their superiors but in terms of veneration, and never publish or exaggerate their faults, and whenever they meet them, give them exterior marks of deference and respect.

It principally requires that they cheerfully submit to, and worthily fulfil all the rules, statutes, and ordinances which superiors, in the exercise of their legitimate power, publish and prescribe to be observed, and that they go “corde volenti, lætanti facie, veloci opere,” wherever they are sent, without questioning the motives, or examining the reasons of the superior who sends them. In all matters of ecclesiastical discipline, in the regulation of parishes, in the care of churches, in the distribution of clerical duties, in all undertakings of consequence which concern the Church of God, obedience requires that



you be guided entirely by the will of the superior placed over you by God. All this is nothing more than the reverence and obedience which were solemnly promised to God on the day of ordination.

## 2. *Obligation of ecclesiastical obedience.*

The first duty, as well as the first virtue, of an ecclesiastic is to obey. Obedience is the corner stone upon which the whole building of ecclesiastical discipline depends. The ecclesiastic who does not obey no matter what virtues he may have, can do no good, for his virtues are only apparent, and his labours are not for the Church of God. St. Bernard said, "Take away your own will by obedience and there will be no hell." It may be also stated, take away obedience, by following your own will, and there will be no heaven. Take away obedience, and there will be no Church upon the earth, for anarchy and confusion would immediately arise, and the wonderful and mysterious structure of the Church of God would quickly disappear.

If obedience be due, and be given, "propter Deum," to infidel kings and pagan magistrates, because it is the command of God, surely it should not, and cannot be denied to Christian prelates and ecclesiastical superiors, who are clothed with the power of God, and are his image upon the earth; who are deputies in his place, and who exercise his authority in the discharge of their ministry. It is of them in particular that our Saviour uttered these remarkable words: "He who hears you hears me, and he who despises you despises me."

Moreover, we should never forget the solemn

promise we made on the day of our ordination. That was a most important day for us, for we then took God for our portion and inheritance, and consecrated to his service our whole lives, and we also offered that which made them any value—our obedience to our Bishop, who is God's representative upon the earth. The ecclesiastic who despises and disregards this obedience, violates one of the most solemn of his obligations.

### 3. *The motives of this obedience.*

Ecclesiastical superiors hold the place of God, exercising his power and ministry, and this should be a reason to ecclesiastics why they should give them the reverence and obedience which are required. This virtue in ecclesiastics makes them resemble their Divine Saviour, whose obedience was put to the severest trial, and whose example they are practically to follow. It conciliates the respect and esteem, not only of our superiors, but of all those with whom we live, and who are witnesses of this virtue. It produces peace and quietness in ourselves, and in our people; and, cherished and favored as it is by God, it will draw down his blessing upon our labours. To this virtue, when exercised in regard of parents, God has attached a temporal reward, namely, length of days; and if we rightly obey those spiritual fathers, and superiors whom God has established, doubtless he will give us in his mercy, to live long in the land. As a reward and fruit of our obedience, God will fill our hearts with the riches of his wisdom, and every day we will increase in the grace and favor of Him, who

has said, that he loves "obedience better than sacrifice."


Have we despised our superiors, and treated them with disrespect? Have we murmured against their commands, and found fault with their arrangements, putting the worst construction upon them? Have we violated the laws and statutes of the diocese, which were enacted by our superiors? If such has been the case let us resolve to amend, and to practise a more perfect obedience for the time to come. "Non ad oculum servientes quasi hominibus placentes, ut servi Jesu Christi facientes voluntatem Dei ex animo."

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### ON THE PATIENCE NECESSARY FOR A PRIEST.

"Patientia vobis necessaria est, ut voluntatem Dei facientes, reportetis promissionem."—HEB. x., 36.

#### 1. *Its necessity derived from the priest's office.*

HE necessity of patience in a priest is seen from the nature of the ecclesiastical ministry, and of the priestly office. It is not the wish of the Almighty God to have an impatient priest upon his altar. It is not his wish to have impatience elevated in the sanctuary, in order to scandalize and to betray it, and to run like a vein of poison through the discharge of all the priestly functions.

On the altar, where the priest officiates minis-

terially, Jesus Christ, the invisible High Priest, will not suffer impatience.

In the pulpit, the priest goes to preach the word of life and salvation, and not to manifest his own defects.

In the confessional, where he will meet with ignorance, tedium, and annoyance, under many forms, it is by his patience the priest will do any good, and were he to want the kindness and toleration, which come from patience, he would fail in the great science of saving souls.

How will the priest deal with the sick and the poor if he have not patience? It will be put to the test by his daily intercourse with the people, especially with sinners, who have lived for years in every sin, and upon whom many remedies have been tried in vain. It is only through patience that he will have any chance of winning these abandoned souls to the ways of virtue.

Not only will the priest be unable to discharge his duties properly; but without patience he will moreover disedify and scandalize.

What a scene before the people to see a priest without self-control and discretion, violating those very virtues which he should be the first to practise?

How badly does he represent Jesus Christ, who went about doing good in meekness and patience?

How often will he prove to every one who see him, that he can bear or suffer nothing; and how, even upon the least contradiction, he will burst out into these violent passions which he will neither overcome nor control. Patience is so necessary for the ecclesiastical duties that, without it, they become

not only unprofitable, but pernicious, and sometimes scandalous.

## 2. *Its necessity derived from Scripture.*

The necessity of patience in the Christian ministry is fully shewn forth by the mouth of our Saviour. When speaking to his disciples our Divine Redeemer told them that they would be persecuted, and put in prison, that they would be betrayed by their parents, and brethren, and kinsmen, and friends, that they would be hated of all men for his name's sake, but that a hair of their head should not perish, and in their patience they should possess their souls. The great virtue which carried the ministers of God through this dreadful ordeal was the virtue of patience. It enabled them to stand fearlessly before those in power, who inflict persecution and injustice. By patience, they supported and bore up against the treason and desertion of those who were nearest and dearest to them. Through patience, they bore with the calumnies and revilings of a wicked generation. With this great virtue they went forth conquering and to conquer, and in the language of the apostle, "their patience had a perfect work."

St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, and addressing the ministers of God, shows the necessity of patience for the priestly office. "Nemini dantes," he says, "ullam offensionem ut non vituperetur ministerium nostrum." This is what we are to avoid, and he afterwards tells what we are to practise, "sed in omnibus exhibeamus nosmetipsos sicut Dei ministros." In all things we are to shew ourselves as the ministers of God. Our ministry is not confined to the

house of God, nor to any single relation or department of life, but in all things, without any exception, we are to shew forth the character of our true ministry—not a ministry of impatience, nor of passion, nor of pleasure, but a ministry of God—and how are we to do that? The apostle himself gives the answer, when he adds “in multa patientia,” and also “in tribulationibus, in necessitatibus, in laboribus, in jejuniis.” Hence our ministry is to be seen not only abounding “in much patience,” but also in these other labours and mortifications, which bespeak and involve this great virtue.

This was the idea St. Paul had of this great virtue of patience, and to the practice of which he exhorted the clergy of his time; and, accordingly, all their labours and ministry were made “perfect in patience,” agreeing to, and confirming therein, the patient character of the Church of God. The Church of God is a patient Church upon the earth. On the cross of Calvary, which gives our religion all its value, we behold the victim and the monument of patience. The Blessed Virgin at the foot of the Cross represents great sorrow, supported by great patience. The history of the Church in every age is but the struggle of her patient life. The lot and portion of Christ's true priests at all times, were what was laid down by our Lord, persecuted and put in prison, suffering perils from false brethren, hated of all men for his name sake, and yet in their patience having their triumph and reward.

Let us resolve then to practise this virtue so necessary for our ministry, that “doing the will of God we may receive his promise.” In all the tribulations

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in which our ministry will involve us, it is patience which will bring us through all. It will give us courage, and constancy, and wisdom, and will put us without fear or trouble in the midst of our enemies. All our works will be perfected in patience, and in patience we shall possess our souls.

### ON TEPIDITY IN A PRIEST.

“Maledictus qui facit opus Dei negligenter.”

#### 1. *Nature of tepidity in an Ecclesiastic.*



**V**HAT tepid water is—a mixture of heat and cold, so is the tepid ecclesiastic; a mixture of good and evil. The tepid priest does not commit grievous sin. In that consists the good. He has little difficulty in committing venial sin, and has in his heart a great affection for it.—Behold the evil! This is that fatal middle course in which all his actions run, with which his mind is perfectly satisfied, although it be condemned by God, and which is the sure forerunner of a worse fate.

The tepid priest has his hands full of good works, but they are not performed with a pure intention. He receives the Sacrament of Penance often, but it is without preparation and amendment. He celebrates Mass daily, but he experiences no fervour, nor feeling of devotion. He says his prayers often, but they are without attention and devotion. He preaches to the people, and instructs them well,

but he cannot hide from them the vanity and complacency which he has in his work. He often gives up to his pleasures and amusements the time which should be devoted to reading and study. He wishes to be holy, but he does not care to cultivate the virtues which would make him so. If he desire to acquire these virtues, he wishes to possess them without labour, and if he wish to subdue himself, he would like to do so without struggle or combat. Above all, he cannot understand what St. John said, "that the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and only the violent bear it away." In a word, he endeavours to unite in himself the spirit of God and the spirit of the devil—to reconcile the life of labour, which an ecclesiastic should lead, with a shameful indolence—to bring the love of God and the love of the sanctuary into the same heart with the love of the world and the love of the creature. He is in the state condemned by the prophet Osee, "His heart is divided, now he shall perish."

Behold the remarkable words, in which the author of the *Memoriale* describes the life of a tepid priest.

"*Quam multi qui dum statum tenent perfectum. nihil minus curant quam perfectionis studium.*

"*Ventri indulgent; moribus secularium se conformant; convivia appetunt, et sine refrenatione sectantur; congerendis pecuniis student, inter mulierum consortia amant ridere*

"*Colloquiis inanibus imo et detractoriis tempus terunt: vanitati interius exteriusque dediti cernuntur: lectioni et meditationi rerum sacrarum vix quidquam temporis impendunt.*

"*Sufficit eis quod horas canonicas non omittant,*



quod rogati sacramenta administrent, quod missas obligationis tempore celebrent, quod scandalum publicum non exhibeant; quod peccatis mortalibus conscientiam oneratam non sentiant.

“Dicunt se ad perfectionem majorem non teneri. Sic in vitiis ordinariis totum tempus vitæ transigunt: puritati cordis non student: languide et perfunctorie sine spiritu interiori, sine zelo divina obeunt ministeria.”

## 2. *The condemnation of the tepid ecclesiastic.*

If the tepid priest wish to see a picture of himself as it is set forth in the Sacred Scripture, and if he desire to read the fatal condemnation pronounced by the wisdom of God upon the tepid ecclesiastic, let him study well the words which are found in the Apocalypse, and which God spoke to the angel of the Church of Laodicea. The ecclesiastic who presided over this church was to all outward appearance irreproachable and without crime. In his life there was no evidence of the gross neglect of his duty. His flock appeared to be the object of his care, and he seemed to study their interests more than his own. He never wasted by personal extravagance the goods of the church or the patrimony of the poor. He never gave any public scandal to the church over which he ruled, and he appeared to hold up the light of a good example amidst the errors and vices of the age in which he lived; yet he had one sin, which was the sin of tepidity; and he said to himself, that he was rich, and made wealthy, and that he had need of nothing; and behold the message which God sends him in the midst

of his complacency, namely, that he was "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, that he knew his works, and that he was neither cold nor hot, and that he would begin to vomit him out of his mouth." Great and good God, how terrible is thy condemnation of tepidity, and how great is thy disgust for it? What will be the dreadful fate of those tepid priests, who stand upon thy altar, and who minister in thy holy house, and who have little even of that outward virtue which existed in this sinful ecclesiastic, who was the disgust and repro-bation of God?

### 3. *Remedies against tepidity.*

Speaking of these remedies, spiritual writers say, that we can never properly know the cure for tepidity, unless we rightly understand the cause. Now, one of the great causes of tepidity in an ecclesiastic is a want of lively faith in the truths of eternity. The tepidity, the languor, the feebleness of our spiritual life, arise from the languor and feebleness of our faith, and this want of lively faith in the great truths of religion, comes from the neglect and omission of our prayers. If we pray well—if every day we make our meditation rightly and with profit, we will have a lively faith, working by charity and manifested by our works. This will pervade all our ecclesiastical duties, and make us fervent in the discharge of them, and that tepidity which is the disgust of God will quickly disappear.

Another cause of tepidity in a priest is giving himself up to pleasure, or engaging in any pursuit which does not belong to the sanctuary. The priest

who acts in this way, must certainly be tepid. He is not corresponding with his vocation, as he concerns himself about business in which God never asked him to interfere, and for which He never gave him any vocation.

Let him give up, or moderate his pleasures, let him abandon altogether these pursuits which have no reference to religion, and let his great concern be the affair of his own soul, and the salvation of his people. If he do this, he will soon be a zealous and fervent minister in the sight of God.

Tepidity is also caused by bad example. By the bad example of indifferent ecclesiastics, we authorize, as it were, our own relaxed and indifferent life. Example being stronger than precept, this bad example leads us into a thousand imperfections, and leaves us in a state of great tepidity. What we should do is, to imitate and follow the good example of edifying ecclesiastics, and above all to follow the example of our Saviour with great courage and confidence.

Finally, the great cause of tepidity is, perhaps, our own cowardice and sluggishness, joined to the difficulty which our corrupt nature feels in following the dictates and precepts of religion. To overcome this, let us recollect, that Christ has said that "his yoke is sweet and his burden light," and that to a soul co-operating with God's grace, all crosses are easy, and all temptations are quickly overcome. "God disposes all things sweetly from end to end," and "He tempers the wind to the shorn lamb."

Resolve never to fall into this dreadful state of tepidity, but to be always "fervent in spirit, serving


the Lord," and so God will never say to you "that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

## ON THE EVILS OF THE TONGUE.

"Domine libera animam meam a labiis iniquis et a lingua dolosa."

Ps. cxix., 2.

1. *With regard to the people.*

HE priest above all others is the man of charity. He is the teacher and the apostle of this blessed virtue. He is the minister of Him who has told us "to love one another." The words of mercy, kindness and benevolence become his lips, and it is strange, though it is true, that there are no evils into which the priest more readily falls than those which offend against charity, and which are commonly called the evils of the tongue.

The priest who indulges in a vain loquacity can with great difficulty avoid these evils of the tongue. This is especially true of him, when the apostle says of all men, "that no man can govern his tongue."

This priest has a desire, full of self-sufficiency and vanity, to hear himself continually speaking. He wishes to shew that he has great intelligence and acquirements, and that he possesses full information on every subject, and with regard to every person. Quickly passing beyond the bounds of moderation, he offends against truth and charity,

and shews to every one who hears him, that he has not learned what the Scripture teaches, that "there is a time for silence, as well as a time for speaking."

The priest is the head of his parish. He is the spiritual father of the people. It is a great evil for the people to offend each other by uncharitableness or malice, but what must the evil be when the father and the pastor of the flock lacerates with the venom of a wicked tongue the children whom he is bound to love? .

Their persons, their manners, their habits, and their temper, are the subjects of his remark and censure. Their moral character and conduct are soon attacked, and he inveighs against them with a force and malice which spring, not from the benign heart of the pastor who is angry with vice, but from a desire to gratify his tongue, which, in the apostle's words is, "the unquiet member filled with deadly poison." Their failings are greatly magnified. Their good qualities are lessened. The worst construction is put upon everything which they do, and when their external actions are above reproach, the basest and the lowest motives are imputed to them. Thus, sometimes, does the tongue of the priest blacken the fairest characters, and drag through the mire, the best reputations among his people.

Give us, O Lord, not to offend in word against the people whom we teach and guide. Bind us together in mutual charity, so that our ministry may be acceptable to them, and filled with fruit!

*2. With regard to superiors.*

The tongue of the uncharitable ecclesiastic would not be "a world of iniquity," as it is styled by the apostle, if it allowed to escape its malice that sacred authority which God has raised up, and those holy rulers whom he has appointed over his people. It is not enough for uncharitable priests to destroy the character of some of their flock who owe them obedience and love, they must also discredit and revile the sacred character of those who rule over themselves, and "who watch over them as if to give God an account of their souls." These ecclesiastics, who want charity as well as discretion, find every fault which they possibly can, with the dispositions and arrangements of their prelates and superiors. Any changes which are made, and which do not happen to be agreeable to them, are in their minds for the worse and not for the better, though they have not sufficient data for judging of their propriety. They aggravate in every possible way the failings of their superiors, which are the unhappy appendages of human nature. They criticize with severity all their proceedings, and sometimes go so far as to impute even the most unworthy motives. It is a fact, which cannot be denied, that the most abandoned sinners, the most reckless characters, receive more kind and charitable consideration than superiors do from the tongues of those unhappy ecclesiastics, who have "the poison of asps under their lips," and who sometimes, under the guise of pleasantry, wipe away that which is everything to a priest—his fair character, and his good name.

It is also a sad reflection to make, that the tongue of the uncharitable ecclesiastic, which is so often purpled by the blood of Jesus Christ, which should announce the law and the testament of God to the people, which should speak words of mercy, and love, and blessing, should become the medium against the anointed of God, and their consecrated guides and rulers, of envy, of hatred, and all uncharitableness. Let those rebels to the gospel of love, let these discontented followers of Jesus Christ who has loved us unto death, and who has commanded us to love one another, let them remember the punishment which God inflicted on the Israelites in the desert because they murmured; let them recollect that the sister of Moses was struck with leprosy for speaking against her brother who was her ruler and her guide; let them see what God says through the mouth of the Prophet of those who resist by word or deed the ordinary ecclesiastical authority under which they live: "To contradict it is like the sin of witchcraft, and not to be obedient is like the sin of idolatry." (1 Kings, xv., 23.)

### 3. *With regard to their Fellow Clergy.*

In his epistle St. Peter tells us "to love the brotherhood." If Christians are so obliged to mutual charity, how much more are ecclesiastics, who are drawn together by closer ties than ordinary Christians are, and who labour for a special end and in an exalted and supernatural work? Were ecclesiastics to offend each other, by words proceeding from an uncharitable mind, all that social union and that happy concord which should prevail between them

will quickly disappear. The natural result of this will be envies, and jealousies, and dissensions; and these necessarily impede, if they do not altogether destroy, the common and united action in the labour of the ministry. Hear the words of the apostle: "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him shew by a good conversation his work in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter zeal, and there be contentions in your hearts, glory not, and be not liars against the truth. For this is not wisdom descending from above, but earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and contention are, there are inconstancy and every evil work."

Reflect also, that if uncharitableness, manifested by the tongue, exists among ecclesiastics, the faithful to whom they should be an example, and whose eyes are ever upon them, will be witnesses of their unseemly strife. They will discover that ecclesiastics do not practise so well that virtue of charity, about which they speak so much. This will be a great disedification and scandal to them. It must lessen their sense of religion, to see it thus degraded in its principal virtue, even by its own ministers, and it must greatly lower their respect for the priestly office and authority, when they see ecclesiastics violate amongst each other the first of these virtues which they are sent to teach.

Inspire thy priesthood, O Lord, with a mutual and supernatural love, that so they may zealously labour in thy cause and for thy people. Spare them the injury and shame which discord brings, and let them ever be joined "in the unity of the Spirit and in the bond of peace."



## ON HUMAN RESPECT.

"Si hominibus placerem Christi servus non essem."—GAL., i, 10.

### 1. *On the evils of human respect.*



N act done from human respect proceeds from the fear of the world and offends and injures the Divine Majesty. This human respect separates us from God. It is a base unworthy motive, it is a cowardly compliance—it is a dishonorable desertion which has made many Christians abandon their duties, and which has come even within the sanctuary.

The ministry of the priest who is the agent and slave of this unworthy feeling, must of necessity be greatly impaired, if not altogether destroyed, because this base motive is the fruitful cause of manifold evils. This human respect, which fears so much the opinion of the world, and which attaches so great a value to the esteem of men, basely and cowardly denies God, although Christ has said to all "that whosoever confesses Him before men, He will also confess him before his Father who is in heaven." This human respect always acts against conscience, betraying and resisting its better feelings. It is a scandal and reproach to religion, and the minister of God, who represents the majesty of religion, and who enforces its precepts upon the faithful, vilifies and degrades religion in his own person, when he regulates his conduct according to the caprice of the

great, or deserts his duty to suit the passions of the people. This was the very motive of human respect with which the Jews terrified Pilate, forcing him to give up the blood of the just and the innocent One, for, if he did not do so, they would say he was no friend of Cæsar.

The priest who acts from human respect does not openly confess his Saviour, for as he is the slave of men, he is no longer the servant of Christ. He does not do his duty on the altar of God, nor lift up his voice against wickedness, lest his denunciation might include some persons of consequence or distinction. He fears that he will lose their society, or their esteem, or that they will give him their censure, or deprive him of his gains. Human respect will never permit the proper denunciation of vice.

In the Confessional, where the priest represents Jesus Christ, and holds his place, mercy is dispensed to those who are neither well prepared, nor well disposed, and their souls are sacrificed out of a vain complaisance to their worldly feelings. In a word, this human respect will run through all the duties of the ministry, and destroy them, if the priest be not on his guard against it, and the poor, who are neglected, are quick enough to see that he is a priest for the rich, or for the world, but that he is not a priest for the people of God.

## *2. Means of overcoming human respect.*

The great remedy against human respect, which is but the fear of the world, is the fear of God alone. This fear of God is a gift of the Holy Ghost, for


which we should ardently pray, and which in all our duties should be ever present to our minds, for if we have it, our ministry will be little guided by what the world will say. In truth no one, priest or layman, has ever done much good who was deterred from what he conceived to be his duty by the opinion of the world. Let him fulfil his office in the most efficient manner he can, and as best he knows how, and the respect and esteem of all good men will naturally follow. When he has but the fear of God before his mind, he will easily despise the idle words of foolish men. It is not what they think or say, that will be the rule of his actions, but what Jesus Christ has commanded, and the Church prescribed. "*Ab auditione mala non timebit.*"

A priest thus influenced by the fear of God, and acting from this motive, no threats can terrify, no promises can win over from his duty. He will say boldly, "It is better to serve God rather than men." He will prefer ignominy and disgrace to the treasures of the world, or to the esteem of the wicked. He will act, like Moses, who left the pleasures of Pharaoh's court, and despised the gold of the Egyptians, in order that he might follow the fortunes of the children of the promise, and, were a greater sacrifice required, he would be ready, like the three children in the fiery furnace, to part even with his life, sooner than give up his duty to God or to his people.

O Lord, let us not do the work of the sanctuary in accordance with the opinion and applause of a wicked world. Let us not sacrifice conscience and virtue to please men. Pierce our flesh and our bones with the fear of thy judgments!

## ON THE NECESSITY OF STUDY ON THE MISSION.

“ Si quis autem ignorat, ignorabitur.”—I. Cor. xiv.



THE priest who does not study on the mission cannot be “the light of the world,” and clearly represents “the blind leading the blind.” The mind of the ignorant priest, or of one who has forgotten what he once knew in his theological studies, is like the desert in which there is no green spot. It is a well of water, which has been dried up. It is a tree, which produces very few leaves, and which has been for a long time without any fruit. It is a house, open to the winds of heaven. Perhaps this want of study is the cause of his scandal, or of his infidelity, and that it has probably led to the tepidity or destruction of many souls, besides being the certain ruin of his own.

### 1. *The want of this study an evil to the flock.*

The priest is the depositary of the divine law. He is the interpreter of the sacred oracles. He is the mouthpiece of the Gospel of God. He is sent with the divine commission among the people to drive away and to dispel the darkness of ignorance, to instruct and to elevate, and by the influence of religion to draw all hearts to God. To fulfil all this without knowledge is impossible, and where

will he attain this knowledge, or how will he preserve it, if he do not study?

No devotion can compensate for the want of this necessary knowledge. No common sense can devise or invent it, although it may determine or regulate it. The course of studies, which is so short in itself, does not permit theological knowledge to be profoundly acquired, and in that short course there is nothing attained but correct doctrinal views, and the elementary laws of morals. The practical application to souls of theological principles is reserved for the missionary life.

Now, if the missionary priest abandon his life of study, relying on his confused recollection of what he formerly learned and knew, the consequences are quickly seen in his people. In the Confessional, either this priest will not guide his people, or he will do so ignorantly and improperly. His instructions in the pulpit, if he go through them at all, will be without profit and fruit, as they are without study and preparation. The profanation of the sacraments, bad confessions, sacrilegious communions, incestuous and invalid marriages, all these flow directly from the ignorance of the priest. Evils multiply in the flock, and sin reigns instead of justice; and though the foulness of heresy does not prevail, though in external religion there is no falling away, still it is not the less certain that the ravenous wolf is in the midst of the fold.

## *2. The want of this study an evil to the Church.*

In these boasted times of enlightenment and progress, the priest who neglects study and knowledge,

and remains in ignorance, brings contempt upon the Church of God. This contempt arises, and exists, not only among the enemies of the Church, and those who are without, but also in the members of her own communion—the children of the flock. It is among these latter that the greatest calamity occurs, for when the people see their pastor ignorant of his duty, and without the knowledge necessary for his state, not only do they condemn and despise him, but religion and virtue itself are lowered in their eyes, and have less influence on their hearts. The ignorance of priests never removed by study either before or during their missionary life has had much to do with the evils of the Church. Ignorance separated from the Church, in the time of the Greek schism, a large portion of her communion, for though human passions came into play and contributed to the result, yet the mischief greatly originated in ignorance. It was the ignorance preceding and generating the corruption of the clergy in the sixteenth century, which contributed to the evils of the so called Reformation, and which devastated some of the fairest portions of God's Church. Wherever the clergy were enlightened, and instructed by study, the baneful heresy made no progress, and took no root, but when ignorance opened the door to evils in priests and people, then was the truth of God frittered away, and the souls of many were shipwrecked in the faith.

3. *The want of this study an evil to the priest himself.*

Not only is the ignorance of the priest an evil to the people whom he guides, and to the Church of

which he is a minister, but it is especially a sin and a crime against his own soul. It is said in the Book of Proverbs, that "he who refuseth to learn, will fall into evils."—"Qui evitat discere incidet in mala." This is particularly true of priests, who, if they do not employ their leisure time in profitable and useful study, will be exposed to numberless evils, and will certainly fall into them.

It may be truly said, that the priest in this country is socially removed from the great majority of his people. They are not equal to him in manner, in character, in sentiment, or in education. Were he to go among them, except for the duties of his office or for the purposes of religion, he would not elevate his character, and would come in contact with, and perhaps contract, their vices. He is therefore compelled to spend much of his time in the solitude of his own house, and how will he have a chance of spending that time with profit to his own soul if he have no love for study and reading?

Abstracting from the great value and utility to the ministry which are to be derived from study, and which naturally flow from it, and considering it as an innocent and harmless way of occupying his time, even in this lower view, it is of the greatest benefit and consideration, because it keeps the priest occupied at home, and separates him from, and prevents danger and sin abroad. If he love not this reading and study, which are so necessary for the ministry, he will love some other pursuit, and have some other passion, and these, while they occupy his mind, may be the ruin of his soul. If he love not this study, he will perhaps seek after festivities and amusements,

or he will have a passionate desire for pleasure; he will delight in paying idle or dangerous visits, or indulging in the conversation or society of worldlings. His whole heart and soul will be in things which are foreign to his ministry, and dangerous to his salvation. Far from being "the man of God," who is instructed by study and enlightened by prayer, he is a man of the world and of pleasure in the character of a priest, and he flies from the holy solitude which he should love, instead of attending like the apostle to reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine. "Attende lectioni, exhortationi, et doctrinæ."

Inspire thy priesthood, O Lord, with a love of study, that "they may speak wisdom among the perfect." Give them not the knowledge which puffeth up, but the charity which edifieth. "O my God, illumine our darkness."—"Deus meus illumina tenebras meas."





## ON AMBITION.

**"Ambitionis via, adoratio diaboli."—ST. BERNARD, Ps.—"Qui habitat."**

### 1. *The condemnation of ambition by Our Saviour.*



**AMBITION** is an inordinate desire of honours, riches, and distinctions. It is highly sinful in a Christian, and it is specially so in an ecclesiastic, who is the follower and the minister of a God who was born in poverty, and who was "the reproach of men and the outcast of the people."

In the 20th chapter of St. Matthew, there is recorded the striking condemnation which Our Saviour gave to ecclesiastical ambition. The two sons of Zebedee, not as yet having received the fulness of grace, and with their minds still formed according to the ambitious notions of the world, were desirous "to sit on the right hand and on the left of our Saviour in his kingdom." When this desire became known to the other apostles, they were moved to indignation. Behold one of the first results of this fatal vice, the envy and jealousy of brethren! Our Divine Lord answering the sons of Zebedee, reminds them of their blindness and ignorance, saying, "you know not what you ask," and still further condemning their sinful ambition, and commending the opposite virtue, he says, "The princes of the Gentiles lord it over them, and they that are the greater, exercise

power upon them. It shall not be so among you, but whosoever will be the greater among you let him be your minister, and he that shall be first among you, shall be your servant. Even as the Son of man is not come to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a redemption for many."

The ambitious ecclesiastic never should forget these sentiments of his Divine Saviour, in which he strongly condemns the views of worldly ambition. The priest who labours in the Church, and serves the Altar, has taken God for his inheritance. He is appointed to be the servant of all, even though he be their guide. Like his Divine Saviour he comes to minister to the wants of the people, and not to be ministered to himself. He should not desire the first places in the Church, nor look for the praise of the people. God is his portion for ever. He is not to seek the glory of men, or the power to rule. He should be above the riches which are not of God, and the human applause and esteem which passeth away. After the example of his Divine Saviour he makes his ministry a redemption for many.

In the 23rd chapter of St. Matthew, Our Saviour condemns in the person of the Pharisees their unholy ambition, and gives to the multitude an exhortation to the opposite virtue.

"The Scribes and Pharisees," said he, "have sitten on the chair of Moses. And all their works they do for to be seen of men. For they make their phylacteries broad, and they enlarge their fringes. And they love the first places at feasts, and the first chairs in the synagogue, and salutations in the market place, and to be called by men 'Rabbi.'"

Hear our Saviour's comment upon this conduct of the Pharisees.

"He that is the greatest among you, shall be your servant, and whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be humbled, and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted."

Is this representation of the Pharisees in any way applicable to the ministers of Christ's sanctuary? Do they love the first places at feasts, and the first chairs in the Church? Do they look for salutations in the public places, and for the glory and esteem of men? Like the Scribes and Pharisees ecclesiastics sit, as it were, on the chair of Moses, instructing the people, do they perform their works to be seen of men?

Were such the case with any ecclesiastic, let him remember that Christ has pronounced a wo against him, as well as against the Pharisee, and that it is only those who humble themselves that God will exalt.

All the piety and virtue of ecclesiastics will not put them beyond the frequent attacks of this dreadful vice of ambition. It was the first sin of the angels, and it was one of those powerful temptations with which the demon assailed our Lord.

An angel, who was the victim of ambition, said to himself, "I will ascend to heaven. I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will be like God," and his ambition plunged him from his place in heaven into the lowest hell. St. Bernard says, "How small the number is of those who have not the desire to rule? O men, worthy of compassion, whom do you imitate? Have you not seen Satan fall from heaven. An angel mounted on the ladder of ambition, and this angel became a demon."

*2. On the means of avoiding this vice.*

The devil, knowing the infirmities of men, and understanding well the power of the temptation, does not fail to make every use which he possibly can of it. Even our Divine Saviour he attacked with the temptation of power, riches, and possession. Shewing him all the kingdoms of the earth, and their glory he said, "all these will I give thee, if falling down thou wilt adore me." With the same passion with which he assailed our Saviour, does he also attack the ministers of his sanctuary, and the priests of his people. He endeavours to infuse into their minds a love of power and promotion. He tells them that they have peculiar qualifications for higher offices than those which they hold, or for better missions than those which they fill. He endeavours to inspire their minds with the love of ecclesiastical power and dignity, and spreads out before them a fancied greatness and an imaginary happiness.—"All this will I give you if falling down you adore me."

The best means to repress and to destroy the craving and desires of this dreadful passion is to have a great hatred and horror of it. Ambition allows no peace, and is its own curse and punishment upon the earth. There is no contentment in the mind, there is no peace in the heart which is excited by ambition. It is a struggle which ever goes on. It is a continual fever and excitement which, even when the end is gained, find nothing except it be misery or sin.

A second means for overcoming this vice is to have always an humble opinion of ourselves, to think

little of our qualifications or abilities, to take the lowest place as most in accordance with our sins and infirmities, and always to prefer to be in subjection rather than in authority.

Give us, O Lord, the great treasure of humility. Make us satisfied with the dispositions of thy Divine Providence. Grant us to love the lowest ministry in thy holy house.

## ON ECCLESIASTICAL OBEDIENCE.

### SECOND MEDITATION.

“Origo, mater, custosque virtutum.”—S. AUG.

#### 1. *On the examples of obedience.*



IN obeying our superiors we only obey God whose power they exercise, and whose representatives they are. Now, in the Sacred Scripture, there are most illustrious examples of this obedience to the Almighty God, and these examples are well worthy of our consideration.

The Scripture says that the Almighty God “tempted” Abraham, to try his obedience. This was the standard which God made the test of his virtue, and upon the result of which depended the blessing and promise which were given to him and to his seed. The sacrifice of his son, which Abraham was required to make, was no ordinary test, for by the fulfilment of it Abraham cut off all the hope of his family, and of their future inheritance, and yet, in obedience to the voice of God, he does not hesitate

to make this heart-rending sacrifice, which was so opposed to the instincts of his nature, and so destructive of his hopes and prospects. Behold the virtue which drew down upon him the blessing of God! "Because thou hast done this thing, and hast not spared thy only begotten son for my sake, I will bless thee, and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is by the sea-shore, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice."

One of the greatest and most excellent virtues illustrated in the life of the Blessed Virgin is that of obedience. In her infancy her obedience to her parents was most remarkable. Even in the years of her childhood she began to serve God in the Temple, where she offered him the obedience of her life. From the time of her presentation there her whole desire was to obey the will of God, and to carry out in her life what her heart loved so much. When the angel, who was the representative and the messenger of God, told her of the mysterious designs of heaven, she at once submitted her will when God called upon her, though the matter seemed to be a mystery and an impossibility.

It is, however, in the life of our Lord that we find the most striking examples of this obedience to God. It was on account of this virtue that He came down from heaven to do his Father's will. "*Ecce venio ut faciam Deus voluntatem tuam.*" This will of his Father he declares to be his food: "*Cibus meus est ut faciam voluntatem ejus qui me misit.*" This was the obedience which he preferred even to his life. As St. Bernard says, "*Dedit vitam ne perderet*

obedientiam." This was the obedience which lifted him up on the cross where he drew all things to himself, "Factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis." Not only was this obedience exercised in regard of the Almighty God himself, but also in reference to those to whom his Father wished him to be obedient, to the Blessed Virgin, to St. Joseph, and even to the cruel tormentors and persecutors who took away his life.

Now, if Abraham obeyed the angel, who was the messenger of God—if the Blessed Virgin submitted to the voice of Gabriel, who announced her mysterious destiny—if even our Divine Saviour submitted to, and obeyed his cruel executioners, saying, "This was their hour and the power of darkness," surely ecclesiastics ought to submit for God's sake to that authority which God established, and to obey willingly those whom God has placed over them, and who watch as if to give God an account of their souls.

## 2. *The qualities of this obedience.*

The first quality of this obedience is that it be a willing obedience; that in obeying our superiors we do so with a willing heart. There should be neither felt nor seen any anger, or bitterness, or melancholy, or reluctance. Above all, there should be no protest or murmuring. "Omnia facite sine murmurationibus." Should anything like this appear, the merit of the obedience is taken away, although the command given were externally fulfilled.

Simplicity is also required in obedience, which means that we should do what we are commanded

without question or inquiry. We should not obey one superior more than another, because of any difference in their condition or abilities, as long as either prescribes what is competent to him. The reasons, or the motives of the order, we are not to inquire into, but to consider only that God has spoken through our superior, and that it is our duty to obey without any question or examination, "*Non placet Deo morosa et disceptatrix obedientia, quæ quidem cum præcipitur quæret, cur, quare, quamobrem præcipitur.*"

To have obedience true and perfect it should be distinguished by promptitude, doing at once what is commanded; and also by a continual fidelity, never varying in our obedience. The old priest, who is venerable by his years and virtues, should practise this virtue in his old age, as well as in the first fervent years of his missionary life. The ecclesiastic, whose college life was distinguished by his obedience and submission to the college statutes and rules, should carry out with him on the mission the same spirit of obedience, which will make him submit to the Diocesan authorities who are appointed over him, and which will induce him to respect and to observe the Diocesan statutes framed and devised to preserve his piety, and to increase his usefulness.

Finally, obedience should be pure. If practised with a view to deceive superiors, it is no longer obedience but deception. The ecclesiastic who would do this is a whited sepulchre, fair without, but within full of all uncleanness. Sooner or later the mask will fall, and will reveal the Pharisee, or the hypocrite. Such are not of the mind of St. Paul, for they are "*Ad oculum servientes quasi hominibus placentes,*"



and they are not "*Servi Jesu Christi facientes ex animo voluntatem Dei.*"


Have we on all occasions practised this virtue? Have we done it willingly, simply, promptly, faithfully? Have we not only obeyed our bishop, who is the chief pastor and shepherd of our souls, but also those other superiors who are invested with power and who exercise authority? Have we obeyed parish priests in their respective parishes? Perhaps we have not the spirit, although we do not violate the letter of obedience. Perhaps without actual resistance of our superiors, we still undermine their authority, by turning it into derision or contempt. The evil tongues of wicked men will not spare for God's sake the authority which God has established, and they forget that in despising their superiors they despise God himself, whose power they exercise, and whose image they are upon the earth.



## ON THE CARE OF THE POOR.

“Noli avertere faciem tuam ab ullo paupere ita enim fiet ut nec a te avertatur facies Domini.”—TOBIAS, iv. 7.

### 1. *On compassion for the poor.*

 HE priest, like Jesus Christ, whom he resembles, is the father of the poor. Like Him the priest is called “Pater pauperum.” The care of the poor devolves upon the Christian ministry, and is a part of it. From the time a person becomes a priest, having the care of souls, this is one of his most important duties, to listen to the cry of the poor, and to assuage the sufferings of the widow and the fatherless.

So great was the care of the poor and compassion for them in the early Church—so anxious were the first Christians to prevent their necessities, that in their charity, which knew no distinction, they formed a community of goods. The apostles, who were the lights and guides of the primitive Church, studied well, and faithfully discharged, their duty to the poor. Whenever they preached the Gospel, either to the Gentiles or to the Circumcision, this appears to be a common obligation. “Tantum ut pauperum memores essemus quod etiam sollicitus fui hoc ipsum facere.”

St. Paul, in his Epistles to the Christian Churches, never failed to remind them of the necessities of the poor, and of the collection of alms, and in his

anxiety to serve the needy, he carried the grace of the faithful to the poor at Jerusalem.

This feeling of compassion for the poor, flowing from the heart of Jesus Christ, has ever remained inherent in the Christian priesthood. Every age since the time of Christ bears witness to it, and the charity and compassion of priests and people have taken, under the guidance of the Church, the most magnificent forms of mercy and benevolence.

The priest is the head of the Christian family. He is the spiritual father of the flock. His care and attention naturally turn to those members who are in most affliction and necessity, and his heart feels, and his hand desires to relieve them. This is the natural feeling of the Christian priesthood, for it is a priesthood of charity and mercy, and when, of themselves, priests are unable to dispense that mercy, and to relieve that suffering, which they behold under many forms, they plead the cause of the poor, and represent their miseries to the faithful. In this way St. Augustine says, "*Quia ergo ad eorum necessitatem explendam idonei non sumus ad vos legati ipsorum sumus.*"

Have we that care and compassion for the poor which should exist in the heart and be seen in the life of every good priest? Do we look upon it as the pride and the glory of our ministry, to provide for the poor? St. Jerome says, "*Gloria sacerdotum est pauperum inopiæ providere.*"

## *2. On the manner of relieving their necessities.*

The first duty of the priest in regard of the poor, is the removal and the relief of their spiritual igno-

rance and necessity. As it is the duty of the priest, so it should be his constant wish and desire, to instruct them properly in the necessary mysteries and principles of the Christian faith, to see that they duly attend to the sacraments and receive them, to take care that their children should not grow up in vice and ignorance, and that they themselves live in a Christian manner in the fear and love of God. Were they to live in this manner, they would inherit the name of "sancti"—the saints; the title which St. Paul gave to the poor of his own time.

With regard to the temporal necessities of the poor, the priest should relieve them according to his abilities, and in this respect he should be the first in charity and generosity, as far as his means would permit him, so that he may be an example to the people of his parish of kindness and mercy to the poor. Were the priest to be hard of heart in the midst of the abundance provided him by the offerings of the faithful, and to close his eyes to the miseries of the poor, and to shut his ears to the cry of their distress and despair, how can he expect that the faithful will be in any way generous or kind to the poor when their pastor is not so, or that they will give of their substance upon which there are so many claims, when they see the priest having no "bowels of mercy" and with a heart of stone?

St. Paul, exhorting the Romans to this charity toward the poor, says, "communicating to the necessities of the saints," and in the same chapter he expresses the manner in which this charity should be given, namely, with simplicity and with cheerfulness.

“He that giveth with simplicity.” A simple and upright intention should direct and regulate the dispensation of alms to the poor. No self-seeking should be found in that action, which may be made most holy in the sight of God, and which when rightly performed is able to free the soul from sin—“*Eleemosyna ab omni peccato et a morte liberat.*” The heart which is truly full of compassion for the poor, is never moved to relieve their wants by vanity, by ostentation, by the love of human praise. In this particular, hear the words of heavenly wisdom—“Therefore when thou dost an alms-deed, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honoured by men. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward.”

“But when thou dost alms, let not thy right hand know what thy left hand doth.”

St. Paul also desires that these gifts of mercy be performed with joy and cheerfulness.—“He that sheweth mercy with cheerfulness.” Those who relieve God’s poor should not be compelled to it by force, or shamed into it by importunity. The fear of what the world would say should not compel the offering. When the gift comes from a donor, who has a sad and unwilling mind, then before God does it lose all its merit; and even in the eyes of men it is greatly lessened, because it is done against the will, and with a bad grace. The apostle says “*Non ex tristitia aut ex necessitate: hilarem enim datorem diligit Deus.*”

Grant us, O Lord, true love and compassion for the poor, so that we may never turn away our eyes


from their wants and miseries. Give us a heart of flesh, and an open hand, and gentle kindly mercy, so that we in return may receive grace and favour from Thee, who has said that a cup of cold water given in thy name shall not lose its reward, and that whatsoever is done to the least of thy brethren, is done to thyself.

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### ON ANNUAL RETREAT.

“Paratum cor meum, Deus, paratum cor meum.”—PSALM  
cvii. 2.

#### 1. *On its value and necessity.*

HE practice of retreat is commended by the highest example, and has come down to us from a long antiquity. In the history of the people of God in the Ancient Law, we see that Moses their leader, before he undertook any work of consequence, always retired from the tumult of affairs, and from intercourse with men, in order that he might consult God in solitude, and that he might be more free to lay open his heart, and to show Him his difficulties and necessities. The Prophet Jeremias acted similarly, retiring into the desert to commune with God, and horrified by the evils of the Jewish people which God visited with a heavy hand. “Who will give me,” said he, “in the wilderness a lodging place of way faring men, and I will leave my people and depart from them.”

Above all, there is the example of our Divine

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Saviour, who, alone on the mountain or in the desert, spent whole nights in prayer. For this purpose he frequently left his apostles, and before he undertook his mission among the people, he gave the example of a retreat into the desert for forty days.

This retreat, of which we see so excellent examples, must therefore be of great intrinsic value and necessity. If those holy men, who were filled with the spirit of God, and if Jesus Christ himself, the saint of saints, thought it necessary "to go aside and rest a little" that they might have free communication with the Almighty God, how much more valuable and necessary is it for us, who are so far removed from the spirit of the sanctuary, and who contract so many stains in our intercourse with the world? Reflect however upon this, that without any such examples, the necessity for annual retreat is very obvious. In the labour of our ministry, which regards the souls of the people, we are taken up with the spiritual concerns and salvation of others, and in doing this, we are liable to forget our own. For a priest engaged in ceaseless labour on the mission, the religious exercises which regard himself are frequently very few, and even when he does come to secret prayer and to self-examination, his prayer is often hurried and distracted, and his examination of himself in which he should, as it were, take his soul in his hands, and sound the depths of his heart, is passing and superficial. In that glance within, he may behold the errors and defects of his life and condition, but so much is he otherwise engaged, so taken up is he with the care of others, that he does not attend to the conversion of his own soul, or to

the maintenance of his spiritual life and union with the Almighty God. In a word, his external ministry, so unceasing and so occupying in itself, and the external forms of religion, will be deprived, if the priest be not on his guard, of the interior spirit which should be their life and soul, and which make them profitable to the people. This shews the value and necessity of retreat, for a priest thus falling away in his own spiritual life, must now and then retire from the occupations of the ministry, and from contact with the people, in order that he may renew his spirit before God, and that he may purge his soul from the vice and sins with which it has been stained.

## 2. *The end of Retreat.*

The end and object of this retreat are the purification of the soul. Ecclesiastics retire a while from the world to renew again that ecclesiastical spirit, with which their hearts were filled when leaving college, and to resume those sentiments of charity and zeal, with which they were originally animated. This retreat is a great purgation of the soul. It is a cleansing away of the stains and of the mire of sin, which may have been contracted in the labour of the ministry, and in the intercourse with the world. It is in the retreat we learn to love the riches of God, which never pass away, and to despise the riches of this world, upon which men set so false a value, and from the possession of which flow so many evils. When in solitude before God, we know how to esteem properly the pomps, and the honours, and the distinctions of men, and never to let our minds think,



or our hearts be set upon them. It is there that we will desire not a long life, but a good one—not to spend our days in idleness, but to have our hands filled with good works. The Almighty God will tell us there, that we are not to be affected by visible things, and that we are to use this world, which is so false and vain, as if we used it not. In a word, ecclesiastics enter into the retreat as men, and they come out of it as priests. They go in slaves of sin, and subject to their passions, and they come out filled with zeal and charity, and resolved to live, amid their duties and cares, “the life hidden with Christ in God.”

### 3. *On the manner of spending the Retreat.*

In making the Retreat, the great and principal thing is to conform exactly to the rules which regulate it. To do this well, to subject ourselves to these regulations in a way to derive fruit and profit from them, will never be done unless we are convinced that the retreat is of the greatest value and necessity to our soul, and that we have great need of it. We go there to lay our life before the Almighty God, to examine our conscience thoroughly, and to behold our sins and defilements in the light which religion throws on them, to cry aloud to God for mercy and pardon, “to think over the years of our life in the bitterness of our soul,” to learn the holy nature, and the great obligations of our ministry, to become men of God and true pastors, and not a mercenary or hireling among the people. The retreat will never teach us all this if we do not go through all its duties in perfect silence, with great recollection,

with gravity of mind and manner, with a subdued and edifying exterior, giving good example to all who see us. Were the retreat, which is the cause of so much grace and mercy, made the occasion of spending our precious time in a useless and unprofitable manner, then will the instrument of good be made the cause of offence, and God's good and gracious gifts will be thrown in his face, or flung heedlessly away.

Bring us, O Lord, into retreat with minds subdued and disposed to receive the impressions of thy holy grace. Make a solitude around us, and in it speak to our hearts. Tell us while we have time to renew the virtues and the spirit of our heavenly ministry.



## ON THE LOVE OF THE PRIEST FOR THE PEOPLE.

‘In hoc cognovimus charitatem Dei, quoniam ille animam suam pro nobis posuit. Et nos debemus pro patribus animas ponere.’—JOAN, iii, 16.

### 1. *On the excellence of this love.*



THE love or charity which exists in the Christian life, is one of the greatest gifts and blessings of God, while it is also one of his strictest commands. “This I command you that you love one another.” This charity for our neighbour accompanies our love of God, because we cannot love God, without loving our neighbour. It is a proof of the love for God, for without fraternal charity, God, who commands it, cannot be loved. It is the practical sign of the interior divine love, which, flowing from the heart of Jesus Christ, animates the souls of men, and unites them in the bonds of heavenly charity.

Jonathan, the servant of God, and David, with whom the Lord was, as we are told in the Old Testament, felt in their hearts this pure, unselfish, and exalted charity, because “the heart of Jonathan was as the heart of David, and he loved him as his own soul,” and the Christians of the primitive time exhibited the rare spectacle of perfect obedience to this precept which Our Saviour gave anew, for their whole lives were only the manifestation of this mutual

charity, and shewed that they had but one heart and one soul.

If the fraternal charity which prevails among Christians is so exalted and excellent a virtue, inasmuch as it is made the subject of the divine command, and upon its observance depends the happiness of the future life, how much more excellent is that charity which should animate the heart of the priest? Not only has he the love which every good Christian possesses, but he feels and manifests the love of the priest for the people—the love of the parent for the children, whom he has begotten in Jesus Christ—the love of the pastor for the flock, which he feeds and tends, and which God gave in charge to him. The priest is the shepherd of the people, acting under Jesus Christ, who is the great shepherd of souls, and therefore it is that he manifests that merciful kindness, and considerate care, which our Lord never failed to shew to the people, and of which his whole life was the most remarkable proof. God said of old, that “his delight was to be with the children of men,” and Christ, who “loved them to the end,” gave them the greatest argument of his excelling charity when he gave up his life upon the cross. “Greater love than this no man hath, that a man would lay down his life for his friends.” The priest should then reflect that, as he resembles Jesus Christ the first pastor, his heart should experience the same feelings and sentiments of charity for the people with which Christ was animated. In a word, the love of Jesus Christ, who was the Saviour of men, and the shepherd of souls, was of the most excellent and surpassing kind, and it is the unquenchable fire

of that same love which should burn in the heart of every priest.

*2. On the necessity of this love.*

If the priest do not love his people, the people will not love their priest, and without this mutual charity existing between them, there will be no fruits of justice in the people, and there will be no hopes from the zeal or ministrations of the priest. He will not have his heart in his work. His mind will not be on the spiritual concerns of the flock for which he has no love, but upon something else pernicious, or at least useless, and the inevitable result will be, that the enemy gains admittance into the fold, and ravages and destroys the flock.

How can the priest do any good among the people whom God has given him in charge, and who should be his joy, and crown, and consolation, if he labour for the sanctification of their soul with an extreme dislike or a supreme indifference? As the hunter endeavours to allure to his net the birds of the field, so should the priest endeavour to entice the souls of the people to the perfections and the love of God. This will be quite impossible if he have no love for them. The love of Jesus Christ for men was as strong as death, and how will the priest save souls as Jesus Christ did, if he have no charity in his heart, or if it be turned into bitterness and disgust?

Consider also that the people quickly discover the heart of the priest. A short time will fully expose all its leanings and feelings to their view, and if his mouth be not opened to them like that of the apostle to the Corinthians, if his heart be not enlarged within

him, how can the people reap from his hand the fruits of justice, or gather from his ministrations the lessons of sanctity or the gifts of God?

Our Divine Saviour "became like unto his brethren," as St. Paul tells us, "that he might become a merciful and faithful High Priest before God," so also the priest who labours for the sanctification of the people, should be assimilated to them, and have but one heart with them, that he also may be a merciful and faithful priest before God.

Consider the affection which St. Paul had for the flock, and see does your pastoral love and zeal in any way resemble it. In one place he says "that he wished to be an anathema for his brethren," and in another, "God is my witness how I desire you in the bowels of Jesus Christ." He writes to the Colossians, "therefore we all cease not to pray for you, and to beg, that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom, and spiritual understanding," and great and extraordinary were the apostle's labours for the flock, which were the most evident proofs of his love. Hear what he writes to the Corinthians: "the signs of my apostleship have been wrought on you in all patience, in signs and wonders, and mighty deeds. For what is there that you have had less than the other Churches, but that I myself was not burthensome to you? Pardon me this injury. Behold, now the third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be burthensome to you. For I seek not the things that are yours but you. For neither ought the children to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. But I will most gladly spend, and be spent myself for

your souls, although loving you more I be loved less." (2 Cor., xii., 12.) Can we address this language of unselfishness and these words of love to our people?

O Lord, fill our hearts with love for our people. They are the fruit of our labours. They are the pledges of our hope. They are the crown and the consolation of our ministry. Make us watch over them, as if to give you an account of their souls. Teach us the great lesson, that to love them, is to love you, and to hate or to despise them, is to hate and to despise our own souls.

## ON CHRISTMAS DAY.

"Christus natus est nobis : venite adoremus."



ON this day is celebrated the great festival of our Lord's birth. This coming of our Lord was good and gracious on the part of God in heaven; it was humble in its accomplishment upon the earth; it was wonderfully salutary in its effects for all men; and, therefore, it is with the greatest feelings of piety and devotion that we should meditate upon this great and gracious mercy of our God.

The desired of the human race for many ages, the hope of the people from afar, long expected and ardently wished for, Christ comes at length to their great joy, in order that he might give liberty and deliverance, and restore sinful man to that justice

and sanctity from which he had fallen: "Qui propter nos homines, et propter nostram salutem, descendit de cœlis."

What opened the joy and glory of heaven to the children of the earth—what brought about a reconciliation which seemed impossible between the justice and mercy of God—what making all things new, as it were, renewed the face of the earth—this marvel of religion, and this mystery of faith, comes this day amongst us. The object of our faith, in which we believe, is here present within us—the mark of the Father's promise, and the fulness of his mercy. He is the pledge of instruction and assistance, for in the time to come He will be our prophet and guide, our saviour and friend. The Ancient Law, the characteristic of which was fear, no longer prevails, and grace and charity distinguish the new dispensation which Christ introduced. Sin has no longer dominion over us, because Christ commences to abolish our slavery in the stable of Bethlehem. There is his first earthly throne of love, from which love proceeds to all men. There is the place from which He first preaches wisdom to the world. There is the tribunal of his heavenly justice, from which already in his birth He begins to condemn for their instruction the vices and follies and passions of men.

1. *Christ the fulfilment of the Prophecies and abrogation of the Law.*

Look at our Saviour as the fulfilment of the early predictions. For many ages He was the long expected Messiah who was to bring the great deliverance in the fulness of time. His coming was the



crushing of the serpent's head, alluded to by the Almighty God, and foretold by Him. This great event sustained and animated all these just men who lived before its accomplishment. It was their faith, and hope, and consolation. The Scriptures tell us, that "Abraham desired to see that day; he saw it in spirit and was glad." Jacob prophesied it on his death-bed. It was announced by David through his whole kingdom. The very idea of this coming dried up the tears of Jeremias, and consoled him in his afflictions as he sat and wept over Jerusalem, for he cried out, that "the bud of justice should spring forth to David and should do judgment and justice upon the earth." It was the great theme which inspired the fervour of Isaias, as with it he commenced all his canticles, and closed all his predictions.

The Mosaic Law, so cherished by the Jews, who even now think that it suffered no abrogation, this Mosaic Law was but the preparation for the coming of Christ. All its sacrifices and ministrations really prefigured him. If the virtue of their ministrations was not founded on the faith of Him to come—if they had no reference to his Divine advent, they became what the apostle called them, "vain and empty elements." All the institutions of this people so dear to God—all the sacrifices of their Temple performed according to the divine command—all their virtue, be it real or seeming, were founded on the faith of the Redeemer to come, so that when He did come He abrogated their law, He fulfilled all their prophecies, He realised all their hopes, and all flesh beheld the glory of God.

## 2. *Christ's teachings.*

When there appeared upon the earth the benignity and the humanity of the Saviour our God, the circumstances of his birth convey to us great lessons of wisdom and instruction.

He who was the Lord of the whole world, He who holds the earth in his hands, and regulates the motions thereof, becomes himself, as it were, a creature of the earth, born in indigence and misery. It would not satisfy Him to become man, but He should appear in the guise of lowly and helpless childhood. He should put on the miseries of a child that He might know our miseries the more, and, participating in them, become for us a better priest and mediator, as He himself was compassed with infirmity. His appearance in the stable virtually cries out what He afterwards taught on the mountain, "Blessed are the poor; blessed are those who weep; blessed are those who suffer."

Born of a royal house, descended from a long line of kings, the Son of David in the flesh, He comes to us in the most miserable and distressing poverty. He was driven from door to door. He was forced to take refuge in the vilest habitation. Rejected by his own people, "He came unto his own and his own received him not;" He literally fulfilled the Scripture saying, "that the Son of man had not whereon to lay his head." He might have been born in the midst of luxury and opulence; He might have come into the world in the palaces of the great, or in the houses of kings, but in his humility, and in his wisdom, He chose the ignominy of a stable, so that in his coming

nothing is seen but misery and rejection, and humiliation. He was not surrounded with pomp or observance. There was no sign or commotion of nature—no terror such as was felt on Sinai, nor was the glory of his presence exhibited as it was on Thabor. He had no legions of angels ministering to his wants, and subservient to his power, but He comes without any one to herald his greatness to the multitude, or to announce his reign to the world. He whom the Scriptures call the “Magnus Dominus” is now confined within the narrow limits of a crib. The figure of the Father’s substance, and the splendour of his glory, are laid in a manger. The mute infant—the speechless child—is the expected Word of God, to whom the whole earth looks for its deliverance. Surely the pride of this world, whether it arises from corrupted nature, or vitiated minds, must be rebuked in the presence of this great mystery.

The proud and worldly minded should learn to lay aside all their vices before this Divine Infant, who comes in such poverty, and who endures so much humiliation. He gives up his liberty, in order that He may give us the true liberty of the children of God. He has become a slave. in order that we may be no longer bondsmen. All the glory and honour, which are his due, He puts aside for the present, in order that he may teach us how to despise that worldly respect and esteem which are so false and fleeting.

Every one of these circumstances which surround his birth contains great instruction for us if we meditate upon them rightly. They teach us humility, for, behold, there is a God humbled. They

learn us the great lesson of obedience, because the Son of God is here obedient to his Father's will. Mortification and self-denial are impressed upon our minds, because the Lord our God comes in the midst of a self-denying destitution. We are here taught to imitate the sufferings of our Saviour, whose very first step into this world was the beginning of his career of sorrow. Our hearts are filled with the spirit of sacrifice and unselfishness, because our Lord's birth was the first portion of that dreadful sacrifice which was consummated on the Cross. Above all, these circumstances infuse into our minds a great sense of the goodness and condescension of our God, who has come down from heaven in misery and humility for our love and salvation.

Unhappy is that Christian soul to whom these circumstances of our Lord's birth give no instruction—to whom this great festival brings neither piety nor fervour. Unhappy is that Christian whom this scene of mercy cannot move from the lethargy in which he lives, and who still clings to the vices and passions in which his heart delights, but miserable above all is he who, forgetting or despising the consideration of God, listens not at this hallowed and gracious time to the heavenly message which Christ gives to all men, and hardens his heart amidst the mercies and the gifts of God.

### 3. *Adoration of Christ.*

We are not merely to look on this great scene of faith and mercy, which is so instructive and so consoling, but we are also to offer him our adoration:—"Venite adoremus." Come then, and like the


Blessed Virgin, recognize under the human form the divinity of your Saviour. Offer him, with his reputed father, St. Joseph, in the secret of your heart, the homage of your profound love. Run to adore him like the shepherds. They are the models put forward for our imitation. No sooner was the joyful tidings announced to them by the angels than they immediately abandoned their charge, and leaving their flocks and watches, came, as the Scripture says, "with haste" to adore their new-born King and Saviour; so also should we, leaving aside all present care and solicitude, hasten with the reverence and homage of our hearts to the crib of Bethlehem. Above all, with the whole Church give thanks to the Almighty God for his great mercy, and for so great a gift. Repeat the sentiment of the angels, "Glory be to God on high, and peace on earth to men of good will," and join in spirit with the multitude of the heavenly army, which fill the whole court of heaven with the praise of God.



## ON PROGRESS IN ECCLESIASTICAL PERFECTION.

“*Esto fidelis et dabo tibi coronam vitæ.*”—*Αποκ.*, ii., 10.

### 1. *That we are not to fall away.*

 HERE are two passages in the Sacred Scripture which illustrate well the state of the spiritual life. The first states, that we are not to turn away our eyes from the spiritual work in which our hands are engaged, and were we to be unfaithful to God's graces, or to forget the loving invitation of our Saviour, it pronounces our unfitness for the kingdom of heaven. “No man putting his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” (*Luke*, ix., 62.)

The second is from St. Paul to the Corinthians, 1 *Epist.*, ix., 24, where he says, “know you not that they that run in the race, all run indeed, but one receiveth the prize. So run that you may obtain.” From these passages of the Sacred Scripture, it appears that in the spiritual life, that there is no going back, that there is no turning aside, but that there is required the continual advance and ardent struggle of one who runs in the race so as to receive the prize. These texts clearly point out the state and struggle of the Christian life, and they also apply with great force to the progress of the ecclesiastic in spiritual things.

The ecclesiastic has entered into the house of God.

He has left his people, and his father's house. As Samuel heard God's voice the fourth time in the Temple, saying "Samuel, Samuel," so the ecclesiastic has frequently heard the call of God inviting him to the sanctuary, and telling him as a priest to offer gifts and sacrifices at the altar. During his ordination, the Holy Spirit of God came upon him, as it descended upon the prophets of old, and true to the grace of his holy vocation, and mindful of the noble and exalted character of his mission and labours, he gives his whole heart and mind to the work of God, and is found faithful in it. In a word, he has put his hand to the plough, and does not look back.

Reflect well on the meaning of these words "looking back" which were used by the Evangelist.

If an ecclesiastic has entered into the college from human motives or earthly views, he is "looking back." Were he present in body but absent in spirit, were his mind engaged or taken up with creatures, or with the things of the world, he is then turning away his eyes from the work in which God engaged him, and trampling upon the graces which brought him into the sanctuary. He is looking back, and therefore not only neglects the grace of his vocation, but shews his unfitness for the kingdom of God.

The ecclesiastic should have no division of affection, for God will not allow a divided heart. There is to be no dissimulation in his conduct, because his justice must exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees. Purity of intention should guide and animate his life. He should engrave on his heart that word of God that "obedience is better than sacrifice," otherwise coming into the sanctuary he would violate its most

holy obligations, and would betray its most sacred interests, and be already judged. "Jam judicatus est."

The priest who labours for the sanctification of souls has his hand to the plough, but let him not look back, otherwise he will forfeit the graces of his vocation because he is unfaithful to them, and he will become the man of sin in the house of God. If he be determined to be a good and faithful priest, his whole mind and heart should be upon the duties which God has given him to do. Were he to consult his passions, or to leave them unsubdued; were he to give himself up to the pleasures and amusements of the world; were he to be a priest without virtue and fruits, and not really loving God, or labouring for his glory, he is then a curse instead of a blessing. He is set up, not for the resurrection, but for the ruin of many souls. He is "the earth, which was watered with the graces and the consolations of God, and which brings forth nothing but thorns and briars, which is near unto a curse, whose end is to be burnt."

When he is tempted to give up his duties because of their difficulty, when the enemy of souls invites him to despise or neglect the laws and precepts of God, telling him that they are hard to bear, let him reflect on the fate of the unhappy disciples who on account of the severity of Our Lord's doctrine abandoned their chance of salvation, and "went back and walked no more with Him."

The example of Judas should never be forgotten. He was called to the most eminent dignity. He had the advantage of personal intercourse with his Divine



Saviour, and of hearing, in his persuasive words, the maxims and precepts of his Gospel. Avarice, however, to which he gradually gave way, at length seized upon the unhappy apostle, and made him turn away his eyes from the interests of his soul and from the kingdom of God, and dreadful was the expiation of his guilt—dreadful in the punishment of his body, and above all, dreadful in the eternal flames of hell.

Teach us, O Lord, never to fall away from our principles or from our duties. Guide us in thy sanctuary, that our hearts may be in our labour, and that we may think of nothing, or look for nothing, but the honour of God and the interests of the people.

*2. That we should make continual progress.*

The better to enforce his instruction, the apostle uses an allegory taken from the contests in the games.

In these contests, persons trained and practised to run, were contending in the race for the prize of the victor. Now, the apostles exhorts the Corinthians to run in the way of virtue, as those in the games run in the race, and as they strive for the earthly crown which is their reward, that Christians should struggle in a similar way for the great prize of salvation. "Know you not, that they that run in the race, all run indeed." Hence, it appears, that the life of the good priest is a continual struggle, and a contest which ever goes on. Nor does this suffice, but the effort and endeavour for his future happiness must be such, as those who run in the games make for the

prize, that is according to the whole extent and measure of their ability—"Sic currite ut comprehendatis."

The life of the priest, then, is a continual exertion in the highest way he is capable of, for the success of his mission, and the sanctification of his soul. He must study to advance in perfection every day. He must labour with all his ability to attain the heavenly prize which God places within his reach.

Some ecclesiastics do not make the exertion which the apostle requires. Free from mortal sin, they are satisfied with discharging their duties in an indifferent manner, provided they give no scandal. They think the high state of perfection is only for religious, and that God does not expect such virtue from priests who live in the world. If they have life at all, their life is not far removed from death. If they move, they advance but slowly, and they have not the fire, the ardour, or the vehemence of the race. They do not practise the exhortation of the apostle, "Sic currite ut comprehendatis."

But what is to be said of those ecclesiastics who, instead of endeavouring to advance in the way of virtue, live in that tepidity which God detests, or lie down in the mire of sin. They cannot advance in the race, as they do not care to enter into it, and they disregard the prize. They are the chosen of the world. They are the stones of the sanctuary. They are the gold of the great house which is the Church of God. Are the faithful to be wiser than they, and is the colour of the gold of God's house to become obscured because of the sins of the sanctuary?

What St. Eucherius says, especially applies to

priests—"Aut summa perfectio aut summa damnatio."

Ask of Almighty God so to run in this heavenly race as to obtain the prize. Beg of Him, that you may increase every day in the virtues of your state, and in the perfection which He expects at your hands, so that you may not be the scandal of the Church, or the ruin of the people.

## ON THE SACRAMENT OF ORDERS.

"Repleti sunt omnes Spiritu Sancto."—Acts., ii., 4.

### 1. *Its great excellence.*



THE Almighty God, in the institution of this sacrament, has given to his people one of the greatest marks of his mercy. For their benefit He has given to certain men, chosen by himself, a great measure of spiritual power, and the grace and wisdom to discharge properly those ecclesiastical duties which concern the whole community. This great power is given to men not for themselves alone, but for the whole Church, and those who receive it, constitute or form the visible government of the Church, and are established as a ministry for the people. Under the Vicar of Christ, the successor of St. Peter, bishops and clergy are appointed to build up the house of God, and to govern and to sanctify the faithful.

What Moses did with the Jews, leading and guiding them under the direction and inspiration of

God, so the prelates of the Christian Church now do in the way of governing and instructing the body of Christ, which is the flock committed to their care. This ministry, so excellent in itself, and so necessary for the public good, has great diversity of office and duty, and, at the same time, wonderful unity of end and purpose. Through it the Church administers the sacraments, and thereby conveys to the souls of men the saving grace of Christ.

Priests offer to the Almighty God the great sacrifice of the Mass, which is substantially the same as the sacrifice of the Cross, and which continues and applies the wonderful fruits thereof. For the purposes of sacrifice, clergy are by their holy orders consecrated by God, and set apart from the rest of the faithful, as the tribe of Levi was separated for the service of God from the rest of Israel. Thus do priests, in the holy sacrifice, exercise the power which is given to them over the natural body of Christ; and the souls of the faithful, which are the mystic body of Christ, they cleanse from their sins, and they instruct and bring up in the way of virtue.

Thus are priests, through this sacrament, made the fathers of the people. They are the shepherds of the flock. They hold the keys of the Church. They are the faithful dispensers in God's house of his heavenly treasures. Through their hands grace and mercy flow, and God, through them, confers his gifts and spreads abroad his benedictions. The divine power is strikingly manifested everywhere, but it is especially so in this sacrament, where God has exhibited, under visible signs and forms, the greatest mercy, and the kindest consideration for his people.

Behold in all this the excellence of this heavenly sacrament.

*2. On the dispositions required.*

The conditions and dispositions required for the worthy reception of this holy sacrament are two-fold—the first remote, the second proximate.

The remote consist, in the first place, in having a divine vocation to the priesthood. This involves in it, and requires, purity of intention and innocence of life; or, at least, an experience for a considerable time of habits of virtue.

In receiving holy orders the Church law requires the observance of the interstices. If they be conferred on successive days, a dispensation for that purpose is required.

The cleric should consider well, that he should have full knowledge and instruction on the nature of the order for which he is preparing. He should know whether or not that particular order is a sacrament. He should understand the full extent of the spiritual power conferred by it, the special dispositions which it demands, and the virtues which it requires the recipient to practise.

The proximate dispositions are those which immediately precede or accompany the ordination.

The careful study of the rite of the Pontifical concerning the order to be received is enjoined, not only that the ceremony may be known, but also that the cleric who receives the order, may profit by the instructions which the bishop gives him.

The cleric who receives the order, should also make beforehand the confession of his sins to ensure

his being in the state of grace, for it should be his special care that the holy sacrament of orders, which is given to him for the public good, should be properly received, and, as it can be conferred upon him but once, that it should be then conferred upon him well.

To make a retreat for some days before the reception of this sacrament is also judged necessary, that the cleric, separated from the world and from all intercourse with men, may beg of God the knowledge of his holy will, and the grace to fulfil it; and that he may also learn to love the virtues of the priesthood, and to acquire the ecclesiastical spirit.

This was the manner in which God acted with his great servant Abraham, when he was bringing him to the observance of his holy will, and to all perfection. He made him leave his country, and his father's house, and go into the desert. When Moses wanted to know the will of God he left the company of men, and sought silence and solitude in which he could commune with God, and our Divine Saviour, before he undertook his public mission, made a retreat for forty days in the desert to shew us how to prepare ourselves by retreat to acquire the virtues, and to discharge the arduous duties of the priesthood.

The cleric, during his ordination, which is the most solemn moment of his life, should reflect on the perpetual sacrifice and consecration which he makes of himself to the Almighty God. At that holy and awful time he should offer the thoughts, words, and deeds of his whole life to the love and service of God. In the case of sub-deaconship he

contracts before God and the Church the vow, or, at least, the obligation of chastity, and resolves to regulate his passions by their subjugation, and to die to all the disordered pleasures of the senses. He also makes the sacrifice of his will, for in future the will of his bishop or superior is a rule and law to him. Priests, before the ceremony of their ordination, is concluded, make to the bishop a solemn promise of this ecclesiastical obedience.


The cleric, at his ordination, renounces the world and the things of the world. He gives up friends, and country, and home. From the day that God has anointed him as his priest, and poured out his spirit upon him, God is to him as his eternal portion, and he is dearer to him than his people, or his father's house.

Ask yourselves what were your dispositions at your ordination. Were you then in the state of grace and friendship with God? Did you enter into his house to become his enemy? Did you come into the Church "*sicut fur et latro*" to betray its most sacred interests, and to violate its most holy obligations? Since your ordination where has been your purity, your obedience, your perfect life? Have you been the man of sin seated in the house of God, or have you been the faithful dispenser of God's mysteries, and the minister of all goodness and blessing to his people.

Let us pray to God in the words of the Pontifical, "*Abundet in nobis totius forma virtutis, auctoritas modesta, pudor constans, innocentiae puritas, et spiritualis observantia disciplinæ.*"

## ON DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

“Cor Jesu charitatis victimam venite adoremus.”—OFF. DE SAC.  
COR.



HE worship of the Sacred Heart is proposed by the Church as most pious. The Sacred Heart is the object of our adoration, and receives from us the highest and most supreme worship, because it is the heart of the Person of the Incarnate Word. It is represented by Jesus Christ himself, as the seat and centre of those pious affections with which he was animated. “Learn of me,” says he, “because I am meek and humble of heart;” and it is the symbol and, as it were, the vessel of that immense and overflowing charity of our Saviour which was displayed so signally for us.

This heart of Jesus Christ was the most loving heart which ever existed in this world. It was always filled with the most ardent attachment, and animated with the sincerest compassion for the souls of men. Its constant desire and wish were, to wash away the debt of justice in its own blood, and to make man, who was fallen and miserable upon the earth, a new and a loving creature in God.

This heart of Jesus Christ is a monument and treasury of sacred love. It is a fountain from which bursts forth the water of life to refresh the weary and the miserable. It is the comfort on this earth of holy souls. When tired and disgusted with the



falsity of this world, and with the miseries of life, where will men turn if not to the heart of Jesus to hide themselves therein, and to dwell there as in a home? It is the tabernacle of God with men, where he delights to dwell and to commune with his loving children. Speaking of this Sacred Heart, St. Bernard almost exhausts the words of praise. He calls it the Temple, the Sancta Sanctorum, the Ark of the Testament. Full of love he ardently cries out, "I have found the heart of my beloved Jesus, my king, my my brother, and my friend." Penetrated with the like sentiments, let us say with this great Saint: "Accedamus ad te, exultabimus et lætabimur in te memores Cordis tui. O quam bonum et quam jucundum habitare in Corde hoc?"

1. *The perfections of the Sacred Heart.*

Consider the perfections of this Sacred Heart. Look at its origin. This heart was formed of the blood of the patriarchs, prophets, and kings of Juda. It was the miraculous fruit of the womb of the purest of virgins. Descended from Abraham and David, Mary, by the power of God, gave to her son Jesus this marvellous and loving heart. Now this heart is the object of the complacency of the Almighty Father. He looks with pleasure on that, which in Jesus Christ is the image of his substance, and the splendour of his glory. This heart is the home and sanctuary of God himself, where he has condescended to dwell in a special way, and as it is the heart of a God-man, it is the fitting object of our worship and adoration.

Great also are the virtues of that loving heart.

No stain of sin ever defiled it, as Christ the man-God was all sanctity itself, full of grace and wisdom. It never laboured under human passion or infirmity, for Christ, though subjected to temptation, was above all sin. It is the handiwork of the wisdom of God, possessing in it all gifts and good things. All perfections find their home there. Justice and sanctity, and goodness and mercy, are seated on a throne in this heavenly temple.

Finally, this great heart of Jesus Christ is in the midst of the Church, full of the fire and flame of charity, and ever beating with sighs and desires for the love of men. Of all the virtues which are enthroned in it, compassion for human misery is in the first place, and every day we have the marks and proofs of this tender and compassionate love, but it was on Calvary that this affection was displayed most strikingly, for this heart was pierced in the midst of the body of our Saviour. The spear of the soldier entered the side of our Lord, and pierced his heart, which in shedding all its blood, gave the great proof of mercy and compassion.

## *2. The Sacred Heart as the source of grace.*

The priest who labours on the mission, whose life is devoted to the salvation of souls, has need of great grace for himself and for his people. Where will he go seek for this grace, if not to the heart of Jesus Christ? He has to bewail his sins and to do penance for them; he has to continue the work of his ministry, and to give his whole heart and mind to it, no matter what his success may be, or what opposition he may meet with, or what trouble he may endure.

How will he weep over his past life—how will his zeal sustain this unceasing labour—how will he infuse the spirit of God into his work if he have neither love or devotion for the heart of Jesus Christ? Perhaps there is no fruit from his labour. God may not have listened to his prayer, nor given any blessing to the work of his hands. This is not wonderful, when the priest neglects the source of grace which is in the midst of the Church, and which is “a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” In the holy Eucharist, the heart of Jesus is there open for all, but especially for the priest of God, whom Jesus wishes to sustain above all others, because of his great office and of his important work. It is to him especially that he addresses the consoling words, “come to me all you that labour and are burdened and I will refresh you.” Our Divine Saviour has revealed that, to those holy priests who are devoted to his Sacred Heart, he will teach the great art of touching the hearts of others, and bringing over to the ways of virtue the most hardened souls.

### 3. *The Sacred Heart the source of consolation.*

The life of the good priest resembles that of Jesus Christ, whose way on this earth was beset with difficulties, and whose crown was a crown of thorns. To imitate this Man of Sorrows, the ministry of the priest must be a warfare, a struggle, and an endurance. It was said of old that “the life of man upon the earth was a warfare,” and this is especially true of the ministry of the priest. Not only has he to struggle against his own passions, and to subdue them, not only has he to despise and to listen not to the voice

of temptation, and to fly the occasion of sin but also putting on the sorrows of his people and bewailing their sins, he has to fight for them against the powers of darkness, and the wickedness of a corrupt world. The sorrows of his people are his sorrows. Their sins press him down to the earth. This is the character of the true priest, and of the ministry of Jesus Christ.

If, however, there be a priest who does not look on his ministry in this light—if his pleasures be the great object, while they are also the delight of his life—if he sit down in the peace and quietness which are the result of an ignorant or of a relaxed conscience, wo to him then, for he has his reward and consolation in this world. His ministry no way resembles that of Jesus Christ, and instead of being the dispenser of grace, and the consoler of the afflicted, and the instrument of the divine blessings, he is but the servant and the slave of the wicked passions which consume him, and he is only the man of sin seated in the Temple of God.

It is then certain from the example of Jesus Christ, and from the nature of the ministerial office, that the life of a good priest is a great struggle, and sorrow upon the earth. Now where is the priest to get consolation to sustain him in his sorrows, and to enable him to bear up against the labours which oppress him, except it be in the heart of Jesus Christ? “Put not your trust in princes,” says the Word of God, “nor in the sons of men,” where then will the priest turn for comfort, if not to this great comforter of souls? The heart of Jesus Christ listens to the cry of his heart, and like the well-beloved disciple, he will lean

upon his Saviour to excite anew the flame of charity, and to get consolation for the sorrows, and strength for the labour of his ministry. This is the sentiment and feeling of St. Paul, who, in the midst of his misery cries out, "*Per Christum abundat consolatio nostra.*"

Unhappy, indeed, is that ecclesiastic who has no prayer to make—no word to say, to the adorable heart of his Saviour—who feels no love, who has no devotion in the presence of this great fire of charity. He has before him, in the heart of the Divine Jesus, the most striking and the most memorable instance of affection, and it is strange, as well as wicked, to make no return for so singular a gift of mercy, and for so great a mark of God's love and condescension.

O adorable heart of Jesus—Temple of the Divinity, for it is God's own heart—Sanctuary where he has found a home—Throne on which are seen the sweetest and the most attractive of the divine perfections, where his humility and loveliness appear, fill our hearts with the sacred fire of charity, and turn them with undivided affection to thee.



## ON SEEKING THE COMPANY OF THE GOOD AND AVOIDING THAT OF THE BAD ECCLESIASTIC.

“His conversation should not be with the vulgar and common ways of men, but with the angels in heaven, or with perfect men upon earth.”—IMITATION, Book iv, c. 5.

### 1. *Good and evil in the Church.*



THE cornfield spoken of in the 13th chapter of St. Matthew truly represents the state of the Christian Church, and it may also be well applied to the ministers of the sanctuary. As in the cornfield there grew up beside the good corn, tares and weeds—noxious plants which occupied and injured the soil—so in the sanctuary of God, in the midst of those good and faithful priests who are “fervent in spirit serving the Lord,” there are some others, whose tepidity is the disgust of God, who dishonour him in his own house, who are the ruin of themselves, and the misfortune of their people.

In the great house of God, which is his Church, and more especially his sanctuary, there are vessels of gold and silver, that is to say, there are faithful priests around God's altar, whose lives are the light of all, and whose prayer is the prayer of the just, whom God, in mercy and kindness to his people, gave them to be their priests; but in this great house of God there are also vessels of clay, and vessels of

dishonour, that is to say, there are some few who are bad priests, who do not use the grace of that vocation which was given them by the Almighty God, and whose lives are an evidence of the neglect, if not of the contempt, of their sacred duties.

What occurs in the cornfield likewise takes place in the sanctuary. There will be some tares amongst the wheat; there will be some chaff amongst the corn; so in the sanctuary of God, in the very midst of holy and faithful priests, there will be some few, who should have never entered into the holy place, and who are no honour to the name they bear. Now, it is their company and conversation that all good ecclesiastics should avoid as much as possible, otherwise they will soon fall down to the level of their associates.

*2. That we should avoid the company of the bad.*

The Prophet Baruch, speaking to the children of the captivity, cautioned them in the most solemn manner, saying, that the Babylonians adored gods of silver and gold, but that they, uncontaminated by such example, should say in their hearts there is only one God to be adored. These ecclesiastics who live in the sanctuary a tepid and careless life, adore gods of silver and gold. They are enemies of the Cross of Christ. They are given to luxury, to ambition, to vanity, to avarice, to intemperance. This is the "*servitus idolorum*" of which the apostle speaks. As the Jews preserved themselves from idolatry in the midst of the wicked city, so also are all good ecclesiastics obliged to fly from "this serving of idols," and to avoid the company of those, who if.

they would not undermine their virtue, would not improve their piety or their love for their duties.

This is the conduct which holy Tobias, even when a youth, pursued with regard to the priests of Israel. Jeroboam, the King of Israel, built strange altars, and appointed priests who were not of the tribe of Levi, and erected idols, saying, "Behold thy gods, O Israel, who brought thee out the land of Egypt." The holy Tobias, far from consorting with these false priests, could not be induced to offer sacrifice with them, but "went up to Jerusalem to the Temple of the Lord, and there adored the Lord God of Israel." Behold our model!

It is true that, unlike Tobias, we have not so much to fear for our faith, but we have every reason to fear for our sense of religion, and our respect for duty. We are slaves to the opinions and prejudices of other men. Instead of despising their censure, we court their favour and love their society, and this to so great a degree as to run the danger of acquiring their bad habits, and of sharing their relaxed opinions. Though we may not agree in their opinions, we do not hesitate to hear them, and their careless and evil lives, once so reprehensible in our eyes, begin at length to look harmless, and to wear almost the appearance of virtue. Gradually, in the sanctuary itself, we see the followers and the adorers of the gods of silver and gold, as the Jews beheld them in the midst of the idolatrous city, and not taking heed to ourselves, and touching the pitch with which we are defiled, we become as careless and as indifferent ecclesiastics as those tepid persons who



are our constant associates:—"Cum electo electus eris, et cum perverso perverteris."

This is certainly true, for St. Paul says, "Evil communications corrupt good manners:" and again, "Know you not that a little leaven corrupts the whole mass." The apostle says still more: "If any man be called a Christian—if he be covetous, or unjust, or a drunkard, with such a one so much as not to eat."

If in the ordinary Christian life such care be required, what must the care and vigilance be which are necessary in the sanctuary?

The experience of every day shews the great danger which is in the company of tepid ecclesiastics. Virtue, which requires to be constantly advancing, cannot dwell in the midst of tepidity or sin, and long remain virtue. Put your hand into the fire, and it will quickly be consumed. Ecclesiastical zeal disappears before self-indulgence, and our high sense of religion is banished from the heart by profane manners and worldly conversation. Keep the company of the tepid with your eyes ever fixed on their evil example, and it is in accordance with reason, that with your nature prone to evil, and too ready to imitate all that it sees, you will quickly glide into errors which you first abhorred, and, sooner or later, you will put on the character of that evil company with which you are surrounded.

### 3. *On seeking the company of the good.*

On the other hand, consider well how invaluable to his clerical brethren is the society of a good priest. Not only do they hear from him words of piety and

edification, but they behold in his life the example of all piety and goodness. Through his means they know how to practise good, and how to avoid evil. Pious and devoted himself, but never ostentatious, he enforces on his brethren, without pretending to it, the lessons of his superior wisdom and virtue. Every time they see or meet him, their minds are improved and made better, and they become sensible of their own wants. Should any difficulty arise, or any misfortune befall them, they come to him as a father and a friend for advice and assistance, and it is never done in vain.

St. Gregory says, that "he who is attached to a virtuous man is inflamed with the love of truth, by his penetration, by his manner of speaking, and by his manner of acting."

"Better," says St. Peter Chrysologus, "is the society of a prudent man, who is simple among the wise, than that of a man whose prudence is ripened among sinners. Better is a hard life among the wise, than an agreeable life among the foolish."


Let us, O Lord, love those who are good. Turn our eyes upon them to imitate their excellent example. Make us learn all the virtues of the sanctuary from those holy priests, who are the glory of thy house, and the salvation of thy people.



## ON THE DAILY CELEBRATION OF MASS.

“Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie.”—LUC., xi, 13.

### 1. *Why priests should celebrate every day.*

 THE Holy Sacrifice of the Mass can be considered in three ways, first, as regards God; secondly, as it has reference to the people, and thirdly, as it concerns the priest himself. Viewed in these three lights, or in any of them, the priest is strongly urged and invited to celebrate Mass every day, or, at least, as often as he possibly can.

It is true that were he prevented by the delicate state of his health, or by any of his lawful and necessary duties, he then abstains from its celebration, but, putting out of view these exceptional cases, it would be well if he would offer the Holy Sacrifice every day.

Were he not to offer this adorable Victim thus frequently, he would allow, whenever he omits it, the great power which the Church of God puts into his hands to remain idle. The Church when making him a minister of the Holy Sacrifice, and giving him so great a power, reasonably expects that he would exercise it frequently.

Moreover, whenever he omits the celebration of Mass, he deprives the Almighty God of great praise and glory. Nothing more holy, more excellent,

more worthy of God, more pleasing in his sight, can be offered to him than this heavenly Victim. It is the sacrifice of praise and prayer, more agreeable to God than that of Juda or Jerusalem. It is the greatest and most ineffable mystery of our faith, offered up by the hand of the priest, and at which the angels assist in fear, and awe, and adoration. It contains no less a victim than Jesus Christ, in whom his heavenly Father takes so great complacency, and who shed all his blood to satisfy the justice, and to avert the anger of God. Certainly nothing is more grateful or more pleasing to the Almighty God than this Sacrifice of the Mass, and its omission takes away and deprives the Almighty God of the honour and praise which, if the Mass were celebrated, he would surely receive.

The Holy Sacrifice, though offered to the honour and glory of God, is also celebrated for the benefit of the people. Were the priest to celebrate every day, the people for whose benefit he offers it, and those assisting at it, would derive great spiritual advantage to their souls. All this advantage is taken away every time the priest omits to say Mass. The Holy Sacrifice, being propitiatory and expiatory, serves the living and the dead who are in purgatory when it is offered for them. Every day then in which it is not celebrated a great deal of spiritual good, which otherwise would accrue to souls, is omitted and left aside.

The priest also offers the Holy Sacrifice for himself, and receives thereby much spiritual profit and assistance. Considered as a daily exercise of religion, so excellent in itself, and so valuable in its spiritual

effects, it should not be omitted on any day without good reasons, otherwise the priest will deprive himself for that day of the greatest spiritual assistance within his reach. It is the noblest act of religion he can perform during the day, giving glory and honour to God, and bringing safety and protection to his own soul, and when the priest begins without any cause to omit it, his course will soon be downwards, and the neglect of his other daily spiritual exercises will quickly follow. When a person exposed to danger, temptation, and distraction, throws away his chief support and protection against these evils, he is thought to be very inconsiderate, if not foolish. That is the very thing which the priest on the mission does when he neglects the daily Mass, for he omits or lays aside his chief strength and protection against the dangers which surround him. It is in this daily sacrifice that he will acquire strength to overcome and to subdue his passions, to preserve himself from all stain of sin, to enlighten his mind, to strengthen him in the way of virtue, and to make him powerful and patient in the midst of his enemies: "Sacrificate sacrificium justitiæ et sperate in Domino"

## 2. *False pretexts for avoiding it.*

Consider well that a priest can say Mass every day if he be so disposed. Were he physically unable to do so, or were it injurious to his health, in these instances it is not to be expected, but in most others, even where his duties are very great and pressing, he can so arrange that he will have time to celebrate Mass. When there is an earnest and anxious desire

in the mind of the priest not to omit on any day this great sacrifice, by which God is so much honoured, and his own soul so much assisted, he will soon find the time necessary for its celebration, and it is from the want of that true and real desire on the part of the priest, that he cannot spare the time required for it, or that he arranges his duties in such a way as to preclude it.

Fear also enters into the mind of some and prevents them from daily offering up this most Holy Sacrifice. Were that a good reason it should always prevent them. In the Sacrifice of the Mass, Christ exhibits, as he did at the Last Supper, all his tenderness and love for men, and he would prefer that you should come to celebrate through love, than that you should stay away through fear. Christ has said to all, "You are no longer servants but friends." This is especially true of the priest, whom he has made his loving and trusted friend, into whose hands he has given so great a treasure, and on whom he has bestowed such mysterious power. It is then a bad manifestation or exhibition of friendship on the part of the priest if he neglect or seldom notice that invitation and precept, in which there is so much love. "Do this in commemoration of me."

Grievous sin, if it should exist, is indeed a reason why the priest should not celebrate, but there is no reason why he should remain in that unhappy state. In these times there is such opportunity for penance and reconciliation, that the ecclesiastic must be very depraved, and attached to sin, if he do not immediately be reconciled to God, and return to the love and kindness of his heavenly Father, and when God

has again received him, and rejoiced over his return; the daily celebration of the Holy Sacrifice is one of the most powerful means to preserve him in that grace and friendship of God which he has recovered.

Be the cause what it may, great indeed is the loss which is sustained by any priest who does not every day lift up his hands in sacrifice. By it he delights and gives pleasure to the heart of God; he fills heaven with rejoicing. The angels as they adore are absorbed in wonder and admiration. Souls in purgatory are freed from pain, souls on earth are freed from sin, and the soul of the priest himself derives new lustre and increased sanctity in God. Great indeed is the loss sustained by any priest who omits this daily sacrifice, and his condition is truly deplorable when he cannot appreciate such a loss.

Resolve never to omit the celebration of Mass on any day in which it is in your power.

### ON ST. BRIGID, PATRONESS OF IRELAND.

"Tu gloria Jerusalem, tu lætitia Israel, tu honorificentia populi nostri."—JUDITH, xv, 10.



ST. Brigid, one of the first of our saints, and the queen of our virgins, shed a lustre and a purity on the ancient Church of Ireland. Innocent like Eve in the garden before her fall, animated with strength and fortitude such as Judith had when God nerved her arm and made her the protection of Israel, endowed with the greatest perfections like the Blessed

Virgin Mary, who is the refuge of all sinners and the mother of many virtues, St. Brigid was the light and glory of the infant Church, and contributed in no small degree to the spread of the faith, and to the observance of virtue among the people.

What St. Patrick was to the whole Church generally, St. Brigid was to those of her own sex in particular, instructing and infusing into them the spirit of true religion, and leaving them the example of perfect virtue. Though St. Patrick was the great founder and apostle of the Church in this country—though his labours were great and unceasing—though his missionaries went on all sides, and he himself “*exultavit ut gigas ad currendam viam*” still it was impossible for him to do everything required. The special need which the Church then had, the Almighty God supplied by raising up St. Brigid, who not only greatly contributed to the conversion of the people, and to the practice of piety amongst them, but also infused into many of the women of Ireland the love of the religious life, and the devotion to the virtues and perfections of the cloister, which have never since passed away. This was the flame which St. Brigid lighted up in faithful hearts, which was symbolised by that perpetual fire burning for many ages at her shrine, which has survived the change of manners and the lapse of time, and the spirit of which is to-day as rife among the people as when St. Brigid laboured at her noble mission with so much success, when God spoke through the wonders of her power, and through the works of her hands.



*1. Her virtues and her miracles.*

Consider and admire the inscrutable ways of that God who is "wonderful in his saints" and who chose a weak woman to be a tower of strength and a prodigy of virtue. No flesh should glory in his sight, for he has made the weak to confound the strong, he has selected a poor virgin, who was an outcast and a wanderer, not only to be an example of the greatest perfection by the subjugation of her passions, and to reflect in her life the virtues of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but also to exercise a wonderful influence in leading souls to God, and in bringing them to the observance of the counsels of the Gospel, and to the highest practice of religious discipline.

St. Brigid not only excelled in the ordinary Christian virtues in an uncommon degree, but God gave her gifts and powers which are bestowed on few. St. Brigid had great humility; she had a heart full of kindness and compassion; she had the open and melting hand of charity. Her purity shone above all her other virtues, shunning and flying from every thing which could wound it in the slightest degree. In this she most resembled the Blessed Virgin Mary, and hence was she truly called "the Mary of Erin," because of her angelic purity, and of the perfection of her divine love.

This holy soul, so full of God's grace and such a vessel of election, God did not suffer to pass her tranquil years in the quiet and innocence of her cloister life, and in the strict observance of holy discipline. God had other designs, and for their accomplishment in his Church he gave to St. Brigid

extraordinary gifts, and mysterious power. Accordingly, like her Divine Saviour she went about in signs and wonders. Wherever she went she left the evidence of her merciful compassion, and she spread around her the gifts and the blessings of God. She made the deaf to hear, the lame to walk, the blind to see, and the dead she restored to life, until all confessed that God spoke through the mouth of his servant, and that his power was in her hands.

As our Divine Saviour went through Palestine, visiting different places, so St. Brigid went about doing good in different parts of Ireland. She passed her early youth and made the vows of her religious life at Ussny, under the care of St. Maccaille. She visited the sainted prelate of Ardagh—St. Mel, who was rich in faith and in many virtues. St. Patrick, who was her great and sainted friend, she saw on his death bed, hearing his last prayer, and receiving his last sigh. Many years of her life she passed in the South, founding, wherever she went, houses of religion, and maintaining in them the observance of discipline and the practice of virtue, but it was on the vast plain of Kildare, by the Cell of the Oak, that she fixed her permanent home, and at the foot of that tower which even now exists, and which is the memorial of the ancient days and the mystery of our own, she lighted up the fire of true religion, and spread around far and near the faith and the love of Jesus Christ in the hearts of the people.

## 2. *Her special mission.*

Consider also the noble work and special mission which God called on her to fulfil. Even at that early

period of the conversion of the island, the Christian religion took such hold, and made such progress in the hearts of many, that they not only observed the precepts of the Gospel, but they were also anxious to practise and to observe the evangelical counsels. Men and women with holy enthusiasm went to the altar, to give their lives to God as a perpetual sacrifice, and it was in the religious life, which regulates and sustains this divine ardour, that they found the fullest gratification of their hopes and wishes.

Inspired by God, St. Brigid continued, if she did not commence, the conventual institution in Ireland, and brought it, even in her own time, to a most happy issue, and made it produce the most wonderful results. Communities of holy virgins, overcoming the weakness of their sex, and the temptations of the world, sprung up under the hand of St. Brigid, and living under the rule which she prescribed, served God in holiness and fear, and made their lives the practice of the perfection and of the praise of God.

This was the seed which St. Brigid sowed in Ireland, which even in the worst of times has produced the most happy fruits, and which, thanks be to the Almighty God, the Father of mercies and the giver of every good gift, is reviving to-day with a strength and power which are worthy of the best and most noble ages of the faith.

O holy St. Brigid, thou who art the light, the ornament, and the glory of the Church of Ireland, be the heavenly patron of its people, and be the especial friend and the protectress of the priests of the sanctuary. Let those who offer sacrifice to the name of God, be worthy of their exalted duties.

Shew forth in their lives the form of all perfection and cover them with the robe of holiness. Let them love justice and hate iniquity. Let their prayer be like incense in the sight of heaven. Let their doctrine be saving and salutary to the people, and let the odour of their lives be the delight of the Church of God.

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## ON DEVOTION TO OUR GUARDIAN ANGEL.

“ Quoniam angelis suis mandavit de te ut custodiant te in omnibus viis tuis.”—PSALM, xc., 11.

### 1. *On the appointment of our Guardian Angel.*



If the mind be turned to God, if the heart be well disposed, we live in a world of grace and mercy. There is no difficulty out of which the hand of God will not lift us; there is no temptation that we will not through God's grace overcome. This is true of every Christian, but it is especially true of the priest who lives in the innermost sanctuary of God. The graces of God are numerous for all, but they are more numerous for a priest, because God knows well that he requires more help than others, and He consults for his difficult and dangerous office.

Besides the numerous internal graces which he receives, the priest has many external graces. These consist in the nature of the duties which he fulfils among the people—in the separation and comparative retirement in which he lives—in the holiness of his

ecclesiastical functions, and in many other external things which belong to his state. Not the least among these external graces, is the Angel Guardian whom God has placed by the side of the priest.

This Angel Guardian is the heavenly messenger sent by God to watch over him. He is a prince of the court of heaven. He is a legate from the side of God. He is the heavenly envoy of God—the bearer of good tidings. He is the angel of support, of strength, of defence, and of consolation. In the Litany of Guardian Angels, he is called “the sublime spirit who approaches the throne of God, and the tutelar angel, who bestows on us his tender care, and who is our guide in the paths of salvation.” As the angel Raphael was appointed by God to guide Tobias, and to instruct him, so does God also place by the side of the priest his Angel Guardian, another Raphael to watch over his soul and body, to sustain him in the difficulties which surround him, and to guide him in his perilous path. The providential care expressed by the mouth of the Psalmist, which the Almighty Father exercised with regard to Jesus Christ, he also exercises towards priests, and to them may be well applied the words of the Psalmist, signifying the care and vigilance with which God through his angels watches over them. “Quoniam angelis suis mandavit de te ut custodiant te in omnibus viis tuis. In manibus portabunt te ne forte offendas ad lapidem pedem tuum.”

## 2. *What the Angel Guardian does for the Priest.*

What the angels did with Lot, inviting him to leave the sinful city, nay, importuning him, and

taking him by the hand, so does the Angel Guardian with the priest, when his soul is placed in peril, and when he is in the midst of the occasion of sin from which he should fly. What the angel Raphael was to Tobias, a guardian and guide, a protector and friend, so is the Angel Guardian to the priest, guiding and protecting him in all his ways.

At the moment of the birth of the priest, God gives him in charge to an angel, who is God's delegate by his side, and nothing will ever separate them, except the evil sentence of eternal woe which is sometimes pronounced at the death of the wicked priest. This angel ever watches by his side in whatever the priest may be employed, whether in prayer, or in labour, or in rest, and he never slumbers at his post. His vigilance is never surprised. He is never thrown off his guard. He is the continual sentinel over soul and body, guarding and preserving them as well as he can from all the motions and attempts of the powerful and wicked enemy.

The office of the priest is surrounded with difficulty, and beset with danger. If the priest follow the counsel of his Angel Guardian, he will be led through the perils of his ministry, untouched and unharmed. The road to heaven is narrow and intricate, hard to be discovered, and when discovered easy to be wandered away from. Now, it is the Angel Guardian who knows this road best—who knows it by the practice of these perfections which has made him a great servant of God, and an angel of his Court—it is the Angel Guardian who will ever guide him securely, and keep him on that narrow way which leads to life.

The Angel Guardian is also the greatest friend of the priest. He will tell him of his faults. He will take him by the hand as the angels did with Lot in the wicked Sodom, and lead him out of the dangers which encompass him.

Were the priest inclined to a life of dissipation, his good angel will tell him to mortify his soul and body by virtue and labours. Does tepidity oppress and make heavy the soul of the priest, who should be always full of zeal and labour in the house of God, his Angel Guardian will tell him, that the Lord God will vomit him out of his mouth? Does the priest mingle in society, which instead of being an example of virtue is an incitement to vice or an occasion of sin, then will his good angel take him by the hand, and say to him as was said to Lot, "arise, lest thou also perish in the wickedness of this city?"

### 3. *The duty of the priest towards his Angel Guardian.*

St. Bernard, writing on the passage in the 90th Psalm which regards the angels, states our duty with regard to the Angel Guardian. He says, "Reverentiam pro præsentia, devotionem pro benevolentia, fiduciam pro custodia."

The greatest respect and reverence are due to his Angel Guardian on the part of the priest. Every ecclesiastic has great respect for his brother clergy, especially for his Bishop, who is the chief pastor and the shepherd of souls. Surely he ought to exhibit equal, if not greater respect, for his Guardian Angel, who is the heavenly representative of God, and whom God has deputed to guide and protect him. Before

the eyes of men, the priest would be the last to commit any unworthy or dishonorable action. Now, if through his faith, he realized the presence of his Angel Guardian, who is the heavenly witness of his conduct, he would never do anything in his presence which would be unworthy or unbecoming the sanctity of his holy state. If the priest truly believed him to be near, and that his eyes were ever upon his actions, the presence of the Angel Guardian would be a great preventive and barrier against his sin, and he would shudder to do in his sight what he would be ashamed or afraid to do in the sight of any good Christian.

Consider also that your Angel Guardian is your greatest friend. To friends who give us good advice in our difficulties, and who stand by us when perils threaten on every side, we have great attachment and devotion. Ever after, we are ready to listen to their counsel with respect and obedience. Now, our Angel Guardian is the angel who counsels, who supports, who strengthens, who consoles us in all our difficulties and temptations, and we should ask our souls, do we love his counsel and do we follow it? Perhaps, instead of listening to his advice and obeying his instruction, we despise all his graces and suggestions, and do not hesitate or scruple to commit in his holy presence the most dreadful sins. Were this our unhappy life, when the end would come our Angel would deliver us over to the judge, and what is more, would be a terrible witness against us on the day of our judgment, saying, that on the part of God he frequently offered us mercy, and that we preferred punishment, that he held out before us the joy of



heaven and the glory of God, and that death and hell were our fatal choice.

Lastly, the priest should have great confidence in his Angel Guardian. This holy spirit has great power with God, and he is willing to exercise it. He stands near the throne of God. Never shaken in fidelity when others rebelled and fell away, his intercessory power is very great with that God to whom he is united by perfect love, and it is therefore that the priest should constantly throw himself on his protection, and seek and demand it in all the trials he may meet with. No one so well fitted as our Angel Guardian to contend against the evil angel, who is the father of sin and the spirit of wickedness, and at our death we have especial need of the strength and protection of our Angel Guardian against the crowd of evil spirits, who cry out and clamour for our soul.

Consider well how much you have been wanting in the reverence, the devotion, and the confidence which you should have in your Angel Guardian. Resolve to amend these defects. Never forget the close relations which God has established between you and this heavenly angel, what great need you have of him, how many benefits he confers upon you, and the great love which you should have for that holy spirit, who keeps watch and ward over your soul. Let the words of God written in Exodus, xxiii, 20, be ever before our minds:—"Behold I will send my angel who shall go before thee, and keep thee in thy journey, and bring thee into the place that I have prepared. Take notice of him, and hear his voice, and do not think him one to be contemned, for he

will not forgive when thou hast sinned, and my name is in him. But if thou wilt hear his voice, and do all that I speak, I will be an enemy to thy enemies, and will afflict them that afflict thee."

## ON THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

"Hoc facite in meam commemorationem."—LUC. xxii, 19.

1. *On the knowledge of the Sacrifice which is required in a priest.*



THE Mass is the great sacrifice of the Christian Church. It continues the sacrifice of the Cross, and applies the fruit thereof to the souls of the people. There is nothing so excellent, so exalted, so holy, or so mysterious in the Church of God. The Council of Trent, speaking on this Holy Sacrifice says: "Necessario fatemur nullum aliud opus adeo sanctum, ac divinum, a Christi fidelibus tractari posse, quam hoc ipsum tremendum mysterium, quo vivifica illa hostia qua Deo Patri reconciliati sumus, in altari per sacerdotes quotidie immolatur."

To offer to God this most Holy Sacrifice is the principal function of the priest. Under Jesus Christ, the great High Priest and invisible sacrificer, the Christian priest who shares in, and is united to, his priesthood, offers up this heavenly Victim, and discharges, in the sight of the people, this most exalted function.

Now, on the priest of this sacrifice, because he is such before God and the people, principally rests the obligation of knowing all which concerns this most holy and heavenly mystery. He should know when, and where, and by whom, it was instituted—what was the object of its institution—what is its nature—what are the effects and fruits which flow from it with regard to the souls of the people, and what is the meaning of those ceremonies which are employed in its celebration.

Were the priest to be deficient in this knowledge he will not have the proper respect and esteem for this Holy Sacrifice, and the heavenly Victim will be offered to God by the hand of one who, if he do not profane it, will at least celebrate with much less perfection and devotion. Moreover, if the priest have but an imperfect knowledge of this great sacrifice, it almost necessarily leads to a similar ignorance or imperfection in the minds of his people. He is the great source of their knowledge, and if the priest of the people, and the shepherd of souls, does not perfectly understand in all its details one of the most essential duties of his state, and the most exalted function of his ministry, how can the people, who are much more removed than he is from the knowledge of God and of his mysteries, be expected to understand the nature, or to realize the fruits, of this august sacrifice?

2. *On the motives with which the priest offers this Holy Oblation.*

Besides the great knowledge which is required with regard to this Holy Sacrifice, it is also neces-

sary on the part of the priest to have in its celebration great purity of purpose, and exalted motive. The priest animated with these views offers up the Holy Victim to carry out the great ends of this most noble sacrifice. These are, adoration, thanksgiving, satisfaction, and prayer.

God, to whom alone supreme honour and worship are due, is fittingly honored and adored by this infinite sacrifice, for here God is offered to God. God the Son honors God the Father.

By this Holy Sacrifice, the priest should thank God for all the favors and benefits which he has conferred upon the whole world, especially for the great benefit of redemption in giving up his Son for our deliverance from sin, and for the benefits of grace, and for the privilege of freedom.

This Holy Sacrifice is also offered to satisfy the divine justice, to turn away the anger of God, to wash away our sins, and to expiate the pains and penalties which are due to them. God is propitiated seeing the infinite Victim which is offered to him.

Lastly, the priest in this Holy Sacrifice impetrates all grace and favour from God. The Divine Jesus in this sacrifice not only obtains from his heavenly Father all that the Church requires, but also fills the soul of the priest who offers, and of the people for whom sacrifice is offered, with heavenly gifts and divine consolations.

Instead of having these holy intentions and exalted views, in offering this heavenly sacrifice, it might happen that the mind of the priest would not think upon them at all, or what is still worse, it

might occur that his mind would be actuated by improper or sinful motives.

Were the priest to say Mass for the purpose of appearing good, and to offer up this Divine Victim in order that he might put on as it were the vesture of holiness, while his heart was far away, and his mind recoiled within, what a profanation would it be, and how would it excite the anger and deserve the vengeance of God?

In offering up this Holy Sacrifice, the priest who would not think of the honour of God, or the satisfaction of the divine justice, but would celebrate only through human respect, in order to please men whose opinions and censures he is afraid of, he would then bring to the altar a most unworthy motive, which is alike displeasing to the Almighty God, and injurious to his own soul.

It might happen that Mass would be celebrated solely from a motive of avarice, and that the priest comes to the altar of his Saviour as Judas came to deliver him to the priests and ancients of the Law, from a love of money. Were this the case with any priest, and it is difficult to suppose it, his heart is mercenary and hardened, and he profanes the most solemn and the most noble thing in the Church of God for the vilest and most selfish purposes. The day will certainly come when he must leave all his wealth behind him, and he will then discover to his great grief and consternation that he has laid up no "treasure in heaven, which neither rust nor moth consumeth," and which death could not take away.

Finally, Mass may be celebrated from custom or through routine, going through it as the priest has

acquired the habit of doing so, not adverting to the greatness of that God to whom it is offered, or to the infinite Victim which is slain upon the Altar.

O Almighty God! save us from these defects and sins when we offer to Thee the sacrifice of thy Son so pleasing in thy sight. Let us not bring sinful motives, or sordid views, or profane passions on that holy altar, where the heavenly Victim is immolated in our hands.

## ON ENVY.

“ Where envying and contention are, there are inconstancy and every evil work.”—ST. JAMES, iii, 16.

1. *On the existence and nature of envy.*

THE sin of envy existed from the very beginning. The rebel angel Lucifer was consumed with envy in heaven, and he could not endure the happiness which Adam enjoyed in paradise upon earth. By means of this vice, the devil has brought about the most disastrous of these results with which he has afflicted the human race.

Envy slew Abel by the hand of Cain his brother. The evil spirit came upon Saul, and through envy of David, Saul sought his life. The sons of Jacob, because they envied their brother, sold him as a slave into Egypt, though he was the comfort of their father and the child of his old age. This vice assaulted even our Blessed Saviour, for his death was compassed by

the Pharisees and antients of the Law, animated and driven on by this fearful passion. Everything which our Saviour performed in his public life they endeavoured to misrepresent, and their eyes were continually watching him to see could they, by any means, make him lose the favor, or excite against him the hostility of the people. Even his blessed life had no protection in its innocence and virtue, from the passions of the envious and the malignant. In the beginning of the Christian Church, this vice crept into and divided the sanctuary of God. St. Paul tells us that some of the ministers of the Church were preaching the Gospel through envy and contention, not sincerely, but thinking to raise up affliction to his bonds.

This vice of envy, which has not spared the sanctuary, is a sin by which pain is experienced in the happiness of others, and joy is felt in their misfortunes. Were a great good to happen to his neighbour, the envious man is sad. On the other hand, he is delighted when some misfortune occurs, and the greater the evil the greater is his delight. Being of very little use themselves, the envious are never satisfied unless when they are endeavouring to impair the utility, or to lessen the character of others, and they think they elevate their own, by pulling down the fairest and best reputations, and pouring out upon them the poison and calumny of embittered minds.

Should there be an ecclesiastic who lives a life hidden with Christ in God—who avoiding the tumult of the world, and the ways of men, seeks the silence of the sanctuary, envy will say of him that he has

very little abilities, and even that little that he does not employ. Should his labours be great, and his zeal produce much fruits, envy will say of him, that he has bad motives. If a priest has acquired the respect, and attracted the favorable notice of the ecclesiastical authorities, envy, because it is wicked, will see nothing in this but the result of treachery, of intrigue, or of deceit. Does a priest preach well to the people? Envy is stirred up to preach better. Is there a tribunal surrounded with persons of education, of distinction, or of piety? Envy is troubled at their number, is pained at every confession which is heard there, and is never pleased until it has at its own feet the voice of the multitude, and until it be surrounded with the throng, and the respect of the people. In a word, within as well as without the sanctuary, nothing can satisfy envy. When the Archangel comes in the last times, he will not escape the tongue of slander, or the poison of envy, as our Divine Saviour, in his day, was assailed by the snares and calumnies of the envious and malignant.

## 2. *Its evil results.*

Not only is envy in itself a great sin, but it opens the door to many evils, and produces in the soul the most fatal results. It is the fruitful parent and the nursing mother of sin. It is the source of many calamities. It is the occasion of, and leads to, a variety of sins—to hatred, to calumny, and to dissensions. Whenever it exists in the soul, it banishes charity, as well as peace. Where envy is, charity has no home. If unchecked, it tends to the uprising of anger and passion, and finally brings on conflict,



and leads to separation. Envy spares nothing, for even in the best things, and in the most virtuous persons, it can see nothing good—nay, it turns the goodness of others to the evil of itself, and makes of their virtue its own sin. As it is the peculiar sin of the demon, envy rejoices in destruction. Like him it hates and cannot endure everything which is good upon the earth, and like him, if it had the power as it has the malice, it would go up into heaven, and exalt itself above God.

### 3. *The means of avoiding it.*

In the sanctuary, more than in any other place, union and charity should exist, and the ministers of God ought to be like the first Christians, having but one heart and one soul. Therefore, consider well the means to be taken to banish or to keep out this dreadful evil. In the first place, prayer to God for humility of heart, and for sincere and earnest charity for our neighbour. Envy is the daughter of pride, and the opponent of charity. Let pride be banished from the soul, and as humility enters, envy and contention will disappear, and charity will introduce love and kindness, instead of hatred.

Reflect also on the dreadful evils of which envy is the cause, and you will have no rest until you destroy it. It leaves no love of God, nor grace, nor goodness in the soul. It opens the door to every kind of evil. It brings on hatred and contention, and thence arise calumnies, dislikes, and detractions. It makes the heart unhappy, and gives it no peace. It destroys fraternal charity, and it interferes with the common action, and united labour of the sanctuary.

It is the desolation of the soul of the priest, and one of the greatest evils of the Church of God. Realize in your mind these fearful results, and you will hate and fly from the sin of envy, and you will love the good, and all who are good.


Finally, set a proper value upon every thing which is in this world, and if you do, your soul will never be envious of any one. It is not the deceitful balance of the world that you are to use, but the standard of the sanctuary. Viewed by the supernatural light thrown by God upon the soul, you will see all the advantages of fortune, and all the gifts in which men take pride, in a very different light from that of the world. Despising everything which is not God, or of God, you will be careless or indifferent about these vain things which trouble the heart, and torment the soul of the envious. Every seeming advantage, which does not help you in your way to God—every thing, however desirable in the eyes of the world, which draws you away from the end of your vocation and from the love and labour of your ministry, you will pass by as if it had no existence, and leave it to be the desire, while it will be also the desolation, of malignant minds.

Resolve, with the grace of God, to destroy envy in every shape and form, to repress in thy breast the first risings of this dreadful passion, and forgetting the faults, only to look upon the virtues and the goodness of thy brethren.

## ON THE SMALL NUMBER OF THE ELECT.

“Multi enim sunt vocati; pauci vero electi.”—**MATT.**, **xxii**, 14.

### 1. *There are few saved in the sanctuary.*

HE sentence of our Saviour, recorded in St. Matthew, applies to the sanctuary as well as to the Christian life. It is a terrible truth. It is a dreadful idea. It is an awful reflection to make—that, of God's greatest servants and ministers, many will fall down, to their eternal perdition. This is commonly believed. Of all those who offer sacrifice on God's altar, and who labour in his sanctuary, how many are there who never had any vocation, who perform the work of the ministry, but who were never invited to do so by God? They came of themselves, impelled by human motives, entering through the window and not through the door, and if their lives be not changed as well as their motives, God will say to them in the end as well as in the beginning, that He never knew them.

How many are there whom God himself led by the hand into the sanctuary, and who have trampled on his heavenly graces in the holy place?

What use was it for Luther to have been made a religious when he violated his vows, and preferred his passions and his pleasures to eternal life? What value was it to Photius to have been gifted with great learning, and to have been made a prince of

the house of God, if he used his great abilities, and his high office, to introduce the evil of schism and heresy; to tear asunder, as far as he could, the seamless garment of Christ; and to waste and destroy that vineyard which God had planted? What utility was it to Nicholas to be one of the first seven deacons, if he allowed the spirit of impurity to seize upon him, body and soul, and to lead him to his destruction? What a misfortune for Judas to have been called to follow the person and doctrine of his Divine Saviour, and to have been made an apostle by his side, when he, for the love of money, sold the life blood of his Master, and consummated his iniquity by the destruction of himself? How many are there who have been called to high places, in whose hands have been placed the graces and the treasures of heaven, who have been made rulers in Israel and princes among the people of God, and whose lives are not in accordance with their office, and who despising the graces of God neglect and betray the sacred interests which are committed to their care? How true is it of them that they have been called and that they are not chosen?

Hear the sentiments of St. Chrysostom, one of the wisest and greatest saints of the Church, and one who does not express himself lightly or rashly on this important subject: "*Non temere dico, sed ut affectus sum, sentio. Non arbitror inter Sacerdotes, plurimos esse qui salvi fiant; sed multo plures qui pereant. In causa est quia res ista excelsum requirit animum.*" And hear also the words which are pronounced by the great St. Augustine upon those who undertake the sacred office, and who discharge its duties in a manner

which is careless before God, and flattering to the world:—"Nihil esse in hac vita, et maxime hoc tempore, facilius et lætius et hominibus acceptabilius Episcopi aut Presbyteri aut Diaconi officio, si perfunctorie atque adulatorie res agatur, sed nihil apud Deum miserius, et tristius, et damnable." "

*2. Reasons why so few are saved.*

One of the great reasons why there are so few ecclesiastics saved is that their lives are not in accordance with the sanctity of their state. They preach the Gospel, but they do not follow it. Their state is holy, but their lives are not so. They have upon their lips the word and the wisdom of God, but there is no holiness in their life, nor no love in their hearts.

Look at the lives of Ophni and Phinees, priests of the Old Law, and see did they walk worthy of their vocation. They were called by God to serve in his sanctuary and to labour in his house. They were the sons of the High Priest, and belonged to the peculiar family which God destined for the work of the ministry. But though Ophni and Phinees were called to the altar, they had not the virtues of the altar. They oppressed the people, taking largely of their goods and substance, and they gave themselves over to the most wicked vices. They had not the virtues of the priesthood, no more than their father Heli, and God took visible vengeance upon them all for their sins. They increase the number of those unhappy ecclesiastics, who, though called with the many, are not chosen with the few.

Secondly, many ecclesiastics are lost because they

come to offer sacrifice and to pray for the people, although the voice of God has forbidden them to do so, and his hand pushes them off the altar. Their fate is as certain as their presumption. What could they be in the house of God but "*fures et latrones*?" What are they but wolves in the clothing of sheep, wolves who ravage and destroy the flock of Christ? Do they not turn the Temple of God, which is the gate of heaven and the place of prayer, into a house of traffic, and would they not change the sanctuary, which is the seat of God's mercy, where he receives the homage and love of the people, into a cavern of Satan, and a den of thieves? They surely are neither called nor chosen.

Besides the want of co-operation with their vocation, and besides the want of vocation itself, there is a third cause which contributes to increase the number of those ecclesiastics who will never see the face of God.

It is this, that the sins of ecclesiastics are greater than the sins of other men, and that the repentance of their hearts, and their return to God, are very rare and very difficult. St. Jerome says, "that if a monk sin, the priest will pray for him, but if a priest fall, who will entreat God for him." See what the Scripture (1 Reg., ii, 26,) says with regard to those evil priests, whom God on account of their wickedness slew with the sword of the enemy:—"Si peccaverit vir in virum placari ei potest Deus, si autem in Dominum peccaverit vir, quis orabit pro eo?"

The sin of the priest is peculiarly against God. The ways and workings of grace are more known to him, and yet with that knowledge he commits the

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evil in which his heart delights. What changes and touches the minds of others has no effect upon his. In the midst of the proofs of God's love, which surround the priest in the sanctuary, the sinful ecclesiastic loses all feeling of gratitude, and sense of shame. His faith has become so cold or dead that he cannot realize to himself the terrors of the judgment and of the justice of God, and if the Almighty do not save his soul by a miracle of grace, his eyes are blinded for ever, and his heart is hardened. Though he was among the called he will never be among the chosen.

Let us admire and adore the incomprehensible wisdom, and the inscrutable ways of God. Let us bow down before the goodness of him who loves to exalt his mercy above his justice, and through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin let us beg of him that our whole lives would be a continual struggle to enter by the narrow gate, and that we might be of those happy few who find it.



## ON VENIAL SIN.

"Ecce quantus ignis quam magnam silvam incendit."—JAC. iii. 5.

 HERE can be no doubt that the scandals of ecclesiastics which afflict the heart of the Church and obscure the gold of the sanctuary can be all traced to venial sin. They have had their rise and beginning there. Ecclesiastics commence by the commission of one venial sin, and afterwards increase their number without reflecting upon their sinfulness. Very soon they fall into the guilt of mortal sin, and make no repentance within, nor make no return to God. The number of these mortal sins is increased, until they grow familiar with this dreadful evil, and until it becomes part of their life, elevating it, and making it the idol and delight of their corrupted hearts. God soon withdraws his graces from the wickedness of such souls, and the end quickly comes, and they consummate their iniquity and precipitate themselves into the abyss.

This is the dreadful course of some scandals, and the first step in it was venial sin. This is the chain which binds them down in hell, and the first link of it was venial sin. This is the fatal misfortune which presses down the unhappy ecclesiastic into the lowest caverns of the damned, and all this reprobation had its rise and origin in venial sin.



### 1. *Its nature and effects.*

Consider well the nature and effects of venial sin. Venial sin is thus defined: "Peccatum veniale actuale est conversio inordinata ad bonum creatum sine aversione tamen a bono increato. Per hanc autem determinationem inordinatam voluntatis circa bonum creatum impeditur seu retardatur affectus ne prompte feratur in Deum." Venial sin does not turn us from God but it lessens our love for him. It loves some created things not in God or for God. However, it does not love them in such a way as would break the friendship of God, or excite his anger. It opposes God, because it is sin and God is holy, and also because all sin, no matter how light it may be, is an enemy to God.

It is commonly said, that there are three kinds of venial sin, first those of frailty, which no one during his whole life can hope to escape, except he has a special privilege such as the Blessed Virgin enjoyed. Secondly, those of negligence, which are committed from want of proper vigilance and mortification; and thirdly, those of habit and deliberation, which are frequently committed by tepid ecclesiastics, and which they take no means to resist, and no care to avoid. These are the dangerous sins which begin the downward course, and which ultimately lead to that dreadful fall which comes on by little and little.

Consider also the effects of venial sin. It disturbs and troubles our real and true devotion. It stops us in our onward progress, and we should reflect that if we do not advance in spiritual things, we are sure

to be going backward. The stream of grace and mercy is checked by venial sin. It narrows and almost closes up the avenues of grace. It draws down upon us great punishments in this life, and still greater in the life to come. It comes in between God and the soul, and cools the friendship and lessens the charity which should exist between them. Deliberate venial sin prevents the soul from tending ardently to God, and loving him with her whole heart. Above all, it disposes the soul to mortal sin, and it is in this, that the great danger lies, for the continual commission of deliberate venial sin, will assuredly end in the loss of grace, and in the hatred of God. It is said in Ecclesiasticus, xix, 1, that "he who despises small things, will fall by little and little." This is the sacred word of God, and to all who commit venial sin it is a warning as well as a condemnation.

## 2. *Its punishment.*

In the Book of Numbers, xx, 3, there is recorded the striking punishment which God inflicted upon a priest, who committed only a venial sin. The children of Israel made a sedition, and came out against Moses and Aaron, who cried to God to open to them a fountain of living water. When Moses took the rod, striking the rock twice, he committed a sin of unbelief. In this, his brother Aaron shared, and although he was the High Priest appointed by God to offer sacrifice and to serve him in the tabernacle of the covenant, God had no regard to his high office. He excluded him from the land which he was to give to the children of Israel, and before

he died, God brought him up into Mount Hor, and stripping him there of the vestments of the priesthood, gave them to his son Eleazar. Behold how Aaron was punished on account of one venial sin!

The cry of Sodom and Gomorrha grew loud before the Lord, and he resolved to destroy them because of their heinous crimes. Lot and his family alone escaped from the coming visitation. The angels took him by the hand, and led himself and his wife and family out of the city of destruction, telling them not to look back but to flee into the mountain. The wife of Lot, permitting her curiosity to overcome her obedience, looked back notwithstanding the instruction of the angel, and for this venial sin was immediately changed into a pillar of salt.

David committed a venial sin of vanity by numbering his people, and God slew thousands of them to punish him for his sin. When the Ark of God came among the Bethsamites they rejoiced to see it and could not refrain their curiosity, and for their venial sin God slew of the people seventy, and many thousands of the common people, until they cried out in terror: "Who shall be able to stand before the Lord this holy God? and to whom shall He go up from us?"

These were dreadful punishments, and in the grievousness of them, we behold the greatness of the sin for which they were inflicted.

Though these temporal punishments inflicted on venial sin are very great, what are they when compared with the fearful pain and torture which will be inflicted on account of venial sin in the world to come? What are they to the sense of pain and to

the fiery flame of purgatory? If the Almighty God has visited venial sin with such inflictions in the time of his mercy, what will be the awful penalty which it must expiate in the time of his justice?

Beholding then the serious nature of venial sin, the punishments which God inflicts upon it, and the great danger that it would lead to a worse and more fatal calamity, let us resolve to avoid it as far as we can, and to turn our hearts from all affection for it.

## ON SILENCE.

“In multiloquio non deerit peccatum, qui autem moderatur labia sua prudentissimus est.”—PROV., x, 9.

1. *The advantages of the love of silence.*

THE rule of silence as it is observed in college is not only a great means for the preservation of order and for the promotion of study, but it is also a powerful means for the acquisition of virtue. The student who observes the rule of silence well, in all probability will advance every day in knowledge and virtue, while he who is careless about this important rule, and who lives in its continual and habitual violation, is sure to lead a tepid life, and to be in the state of sin.

For every ecclesiastic the love of silence and moderation in speaking are of the greatest value. There is no class of evils an ecclesiastic has to fear more than the evils of the tongue. By that moderation,

or silence, he will be enabled to avoid those unhappy results which the apostle St. James represents as of the most fatal kind. The author of the Imitation says, "It is easier to be altogether silent than not to offend in words." The silence which is here commended is that which avoids giving offence, and which is the effect of prudence and moderation.

The Scripture says, that "there is a time for silence as well as a time for speaking," and it is that prudent medium and that happy moderation which an ecclesiastic should love and study. From the nature of his office every ecclesiastic is obliged to speak often, and sometimes a great deal, in the confessional, on the altar, and among the people; but although this is very necessary, one of his greatest gifts is to know when and where to be silent.

This silence and moderation of the tongue are greatly commended by the Wise Man, who says they are the marks of wisdom. "There is one that holdeth his peace that is found wise, and there is another that is hateful that is bold in speech. There is one that holdeth his peace because he knoweth not what to say, and there is another that holdeth his peace, knowing the proper time. A wise man will hold his peace till he see opportunity, but a fool will regard no time."

This silence is the nurse and guardian of virtue. It maintains piety in the soul, for without restraining the tongue no one is virtuous. "If any one think himself to be religious, not bridling his tongue but deceiving his own heart, this man's religion is vain." Silence is necessary for prayer, and meditation, and retreat. One of the Fathers calls silence "the

increase of the light of heaven in the soul, the help of contemplation, an invisible advance in virtue, a secret elevation of the soul to God. The friend of silence," he says, "comes near God, and entering in a concealed way into his holy familiarity is illumined by his divine light."

It is in silence that God speaks to the soul, and infuses into it that peace which surpasses all human understanding. It is in silence that he stills the tumult of our passions—that he calms the storms and struggles of the mind—that he whispers hope and gives encouragement—that he infuses into the soul the communications of grace and gives to her the endearing marks of his affectionate love. Of his coming in silence we have a remarkable instance in the 19th chapter of the Third Book of Kings, where God is said to come, not in the overthrowing of the mountains, nor in breaking the rocks to pieces, nor in the wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in the whistling of the gentle breeze, which could be heard only in silence, and when the Prophet, at the mouth of the Cave of Horeb, heard it in the stillness of nature and in the silence of his soul, the Word of God came to him, saying, "What dost thou here, Elias?"

## *2. On the evil of speaking too much.*

If silence or moderation of the tongue be the mark of wisdom it is also true to say that speaking too much is the surest evidence of folly. The Scripture says: (Eccl. x, 44,) "Stultus verba multiplicat; and again (Eccl. xxi, 28,) it says, "The heart of fools is in their mouth, and the mouth of wise men is in

their heart," and the reason of this is because the foolish say whatever comes into their minds without consideration or reflection, and the expressions of their mouths are the manifestations of their hearts, while the prudent have their mouths in their hearts, because they never express anything until they have thought over it within, and until it has met the approval of their conscience.

This want of restraint over the tongue is also the source of many evils. How many idle words are said for which we will one day have to give an account? How many words are said which were better to have not said? How many words are said which are false, detracting, calumnious, or malicious? Here is the fertile source of hatred and envy, of quarrelling, of open division and contention, and after these will come a long train of evils, all of which have their source in the sins and immoderation of the tongue.

Where there is no silence or moderation in speaking there is no peace or calm in the soul. This immoderation or want of due restraint extinguishes and drives away the Spirit of God, which loves silence, and modesty, and recollection. It seeks external things and lives in them, and the mind is filled with distractions and imaginations from without. The heart of a man who speaks too much is like a desolate house, through which the winds of heaven blow freely, or, as the Scripture says, "It is like a city without walls, open and defenceless."


Pray earnestly to our Lord Jesus Christ, that in this virtue of silence you would imitate him who spent thirty years of his life in silence, and recollection,

and retirement, and who, in the course of his public mission, when his enemies accused him of the vilest crimes, answered them only by his silence—"Jesus autem tacebat."

## ON SCANDAL.

"Væ homini illi per quem scandalum venit."—MATT., xviii, 7.

1. *What scandal is.*

 **W**HAT gives the greatest pain to the heart of the Almighty God—what grievously afflicts the Church, our Mother—what disturbs the faith of the people and loosens the bonds of their obedience, is the scandals of the priesthood. Any ordinary scandal, our Divine Saviour threatens and denounces with the greatest severity, saying, "Wo be to the man by whom the scandal cometh." If such be the wickedness of the scandal of any Christian, and if its punishment be so great, what will be the woe, and what will be the destruction of the scandal which appears upon the altar? How will God destroy the unfortunate priest, who, instead of being the angel of God and the instrument of the divine blessings, becomes in the Church the man of sin, and the master of iniquity?

The sin of scandal is stated to consist not only in directly advising others to do evil, but also in inducing them indirectly by acts to the commission of sin. The ecclesiastic rarely gives scandal by directly



advising evil, but he sometimes does so when his unchristian life and the open violation of his moral duties and obligations, lessen in the mind of the faithful their sense of religion, and, inciting them to the commission of sin, become as it were their justification. This is the usual and ordinary way in which those few ecclesiastics, who fall away from their first fervour and who lose the divine grace, outrage the majesty of God even in his own house, and instead of being the dispensers of every blessing, and the example of all goodness to the people, become the occasion of their sin, and turn away their face from the altar.

Consider, therefore, the great evil which scandal is to the priest, and also the great evil which it is to the people.

## 2. *Scandal an evil to the priest.*

On the day the priest celebrates his first Mass, he stands praying on the altar of innocence like an angel of God. He is divinely consecrated by the triple bond of baptism, confirmation, and orders. His soul is the image of God. It is filled with faith and grace, and is radiant with the divine wisdom and the heavenly virtue which dwell in it. Because he is unfaithful in the house of God, sin hideous and grievous comes into that soul, and its grace, and beauty, and faithfulness, are destroyed; and, no longer the true servant, and the faithful minister, the priest becomes the slave of wicked passions, and the emissary and the agent of iniquity.

The priest is made "a ruler in Israel," and scandal makes him an outcast. He is made a prince among

the people of God, and scandal makes him a slave. He is placed as a sentinel on the watch-tower to guard jealously the sacred treasure confided to him, and by scandal he has not only slept at his post, but he has opened and betrayed the citadel to the unscrupulous enemy.

The priest is made a prince to rule, and a judge to dispense justice, and his sins and scandals have made him, more than any member of his flock, the object of the justice and of the anger of God.

The priest is the representative of charity, and is the medium of God's mercy and compassion, and scandal has made himself the great object of the mercy of men, and of their commiseration.

The priest in the Church was like the prophets of old, pouring out by prayer and sacrifice the spirit of God upon the people, and scandal has brought him so low that his own soul now requires the prayers of all.

In fine, the priest is like an angel of God by his purity, by his simplicity, by his self-sacrifice, and by his holy life; and scandal, robbing him of all his virtue, drags him down from heaven. O may we not cry out with the prophet Ezekiel; "How hast thou fallen, O Lucifer, star of the morning."

Behold the fearful evil which scandal is to the soul of the priest, and fly from it as you would fly from the sight of hell itself!

## *2. The scandal of the priest an evil to the people.*

If the scandal of the sanctuary work such ruin to the soul of the priest, it also contributes in no small degree to the ruin of the people. When, by the inscrutable providence of God, a great scandal is

permitted, the community where it occurs is greatly shocked, and its Christian feelings are outraged. Religion itself is lessened and degraded, and the faith of the people is weakened and disturbed, because every one will not at once distinguish between the holiness of the religion and the unworthiness of the minister—between the faith held by Judas and he traitor Judas himself.

Scandal of this kind profanes the sacred mysteries **in the eyes of the people**. It holds up the sacraments **to contempt**. It dishonours and degrades the holy order of the priesthood. It brings sorrow and affliction into the hearts of the wise and good, and scorn and ridicule are in the mouths of the enemies of the Church of God.

Perhaps those great scandals, which shock the religion, and outrage the feelings of the people, do not inflict the most injury. It is by lesser scandals, which do not call for the exercise of ecclesiastical authority, and which do not give so much offence, or excite so much disgust, that most evil is done, and that the virtue of the people is gradually undermined or frittered away, and their hearts turned from the love and service of Jesus Christ.

Were the priest to be given over to a scandalous pride, how could he expect to have an humble and a modest people? Were he given up to the love of money, making his holy ministry the instrument of his avarice, what a fatal vice would he encourage in his people? The priest must not only be “*sanctus, innocens, impollutus, segregatus a peccatoribus,*” but he must be also above the suspicion of evil. Were he a bad example, or a cause of suspicion in this par-

ticular, how could he maintain and preserve among his flock that holy purity which is the most beautiful and precious of the Christian virtues? If the priest do not perform his holy functions with care and modesty, and free from all voluntary distraction and irreverence, surely he must excite the irreverence and indevotion of those who see him. Let us consider over and over again the words of the Memoriale.

“Væ tibi qui sine reverentia et pietate altari meo assistis! Oves meas ad irreverentiam ad incredulitatem, ad impietatem trahis.”

“Væ tibi qui immundus es! Væ tibi qui ~~cum~~ mulieribus familiaris es, et ut talis ~~noveris~~! Oves meas in inverecundiam, in illicita commercia ducis, et in voluptatibus foedissimarum cœno exemplo tuo fovea.”

“Væ tibi qui avarus es, et congerendis pecuniis studes! Oves meas in sacri ministerii contemptum, cupidosque in idolorum servitute, in avaritia confortas.”

“Væ tibi qui superbus es, vanitatisque deditus sacram humilitatem et modestiam, tua agendi ratione convellis, ovesque ad periculosas vanitates stimulas.”

“Væ tibi qui haberis ut vir comessationum amator. Legem penitentiae, quantum in te est, factis tuis subvertis: potatores, cunctosque secundum carnem viventes, in excessibus suis justificas.”

“Væ tibi qui in conviviiis amatoria cautare non vereris, aut cantantibus plaudis! Per hoc ovium ora, omni scurrilitati aperis. Per hoc es omnium lascivorum colloquiorum fautor.”

“Væ tibi qui de mane ad vesperam venationibus illicitis, inanibusve lusibus es deditus, docens per hoc

posse tempus inaniter consumi, et licitum esse homini in hac vita indesinenter delectari."

Weigh and consider well these words before the Almighty God, and see how the sins of the priest, when they are scandalous, naturally result in the evil of the people.

#### 4. *The punishment of scandal.*

Among the evils brought on by scandal, the most dreadful is its certain punishment in this, or in the life to come. Even on this earth God has visited scandal with the visible marks of his anger, and the fear of this has been a great restraint on this fearful crime. Eleazar was about to suffer death "for the most venerable and most holy laws." Sooner than abandon the ordinances of the holy law made by God, and thereby give scandal to the people of his nation, he chose to die with the stripes, and his motive was, the fear of God's punishment. "For the present time," said he, "I should be delivered from the punishments of men, yet should not I escape the hand of the Almighty neither alive nor dead."

These dreadful punishments of God in every age we find inflicted in the person of scandalous priests and princes. God in his unscrutable ways often permits wicked princes to rule. Achab and Jezabel ruled in Israel. It was said of Achab that he was sold to do evil in the sight of God. He did more evil before God than all that were before him. He scandalized all Israel by deserting the law of Moses, and erecting altars to Baal, and in his person wickedness and injustice ruled over and scandalized the people. At last, God said to him, through the mouth

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of Elias, "I will bring evil upon thee, and I will cut down thy posterity. In this place wherein the dogs have licked the blood of Naboth, they shall lick thy blood also."

The anger of God also fell visibly on the sons of Heli, who though called to serve God in the sanctuary, yet led lives of wickedness and scandal in the sanctuary; and Jeroboam, who induced Israel to sin, and committed scandal against the people, was a proverb of wickedness in the mouth of God, and his posterity was cut off for ever.

The history of the Church furnishes examples of the visible fate inflicted by God on scandalous ecclesiastics. The providence of God is strikingly exemplified in their unhappy lot. The fate of the wicked priests and princes of the Old Law was not more dreadful than theirs. Driven from the sanctuary which they disgraced, become the reproach and the shame of the people, blinded and hardened of heart, some sudden death overtakes them in the midst of their sins, or some evil end befalls them which strikes terror into the hearts of all.

Pray humbly and earnestly never to be the cause of scandal to the people. What an evil were you by your sins to make void the blood of the New Testament, or to scandalize any of the little ones of Jesus Christ. Better for you that you never stood upon the altar of God—better for you that you never had been born.

Never forget that scandal has plunged some, who were once holy and noble priests, into the lowest caverns of hell, and write on your heart in letters of fire those words of your Divine Master, "Wo be to the man by whom the scandal cometh."

## ON VENIAL SIN.

### SECOND MEDITATION.

“Qui spernit modica paulatim decidet.”—ECCLES., xix, 1.



CONSIDER well the number and the variety of the venial sins into which ecclesiastics, whether students or priests, commonly fall, that you may endeavour to avoid them.

Though the life of a student in college may be virtuous and excellent—though he may be exceedingly good and well disposed, still if he do not exercise the greatest vigilance he will fall into a great many venial sins. On account of his voluntary distractions he will not make his meditation well, nor will he properly address God in prayer. Inattentive at the holy sacrifice of the Mass, he will let that precious time pass by without offering up the sacrifice to God for his many wants and necessities, never thinking that he is a witness of the sublime sacrifice which is substantially the same as that on Calvary. Many venial sins are also committed by want of reverence or attention, when he visits the Holy Sacrament to pay his Divine Saviour his homage and adoration, and that self-examination, either particular or general, which is so necessary for his progress in virtue and spiritual things, he will either omit entirely, or perform with negligence. He is habitually careless or indifferent with regard to the observance of rules which he considers un-

important. It may be, that he lives in the continual and habitual violation of the rule of silence—that he pays no regard to that “*altum silentium*” which should at the time prescribed, pervade the whole college. Were this his usual life and his constant course of action, it is not wonderful that his soul would be in a state of tepidity and sin.

Behold the little things which lay waste the vineyard, which strip the soul of its beauty in the sight of God, and deaden its fervour in his service!

The student in other ways also falls into many venial sins. He is often filled with secret complacency, or vanity, or self-esteem. A little self-love may run through his life and may predominate in his actions. Perhaps he studies his convenience and enjoyment to so great a degree as not to hesitate for their gratification to violate the rule of the college or the rights of others. In the company of those who are not as excellent, as devoted, as observant, or as holy as they should be, or as their state demands, he likes to spend his time, and in the midst of the levity or uncharitableness in which they indulge, his tongue utters idle and useless words, and his heart loses insensibly its love for God and its respect for virtue.

The student also sins venially by giving way to envy which burns him within, by yielding to secret dislike and jealousy of others, by indulging in conversation which is somewhat unkind and uncharitable, and which tends to lessen the character, the abilities, or the virtues of his brethren.

These are the little sins which make the heart heavy, and stay the onward progress of the good ecclesiastic, and were it not for their sinfulness his



life in the house of God would shine with the lustre of many virtues, and would shew forth before the eyes of his brethren the continual light of excellent example.

Consider, in the second place, that although the priest receives the graces of the sanctuary, and lives in an atmosphere of virtue, still, like the just man who falls seven times a day, he commits many venial offences. His meditation, which should unite his heart to God, and which should keep the state of his soul constantly before his eyes, he will neglect to a considerable degree, or he will make it distractedly and perhaps irreverently. The celebration of Mass is cold, with little fervour or devotion, making little or no thanksgiving to the Almighty God after being allowed by him to offer so great a sacrifice. The Breviary, which is the book of public praise and prayer, he may consider as a burden instead of a blessing. He may read it hurriedly and distractedly, turning into a labour what should be a source of love and consolation. Taken up so much with the care of others, he may greatly neglect his own self-examination and will not therefore perceive the wants or the wounds of his soul.

With regard to others, the priest may sin venially by not fully attending to the spiritual necessities of the people, by unkind or uncharitable discourse, or by the loss of his time which is so valuable and which should be entirely devoted to the people, and with regard to himself, he may fall into venial sin by permitting notions of pride, or vanity, or avarice, or other inordinate desires, to have some hold and influence on his life and conduct.

These are some of the ways through which venial sin is committed, and which border closely on mortal sin. If the priest leave them without any check or remedy, they will assuredly lead to the tepidity of his soul, and will end in the loss of grace and in the destruction of virtue.

Consider, thirdly, the remedies which are to be used against venial sin. In the first place, attach more importance to the commission of venial sin than you have hitherto been accustomed to do. Consider them not so much in themselves, although venial sins in themselves are serious evils, but reflect upon the dangerous state in which they place the soul, and the dreadful consequences which generally follow their deliberate and habitual commission. Looking on them in this way, you will fear them more and avoid them more.

In the second place, endeavour to discover among your venial offences those which are most sinful. See those venial sins which are most deliberate, which have most malice, which most closely border on mortal sin, and most naturally lead to it, discover the sources and occasions of them, and make a resolution to avoid at least the principal ones in future. Make them the subject of your particular examen. Let the resolutions of your meditation have reference to them. Make frequent acts of contrition with regard to them. Think of them at the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

Whenever you fall into them, impose some little penance upon yourself for the violation, and always have a great fear as well as hatred of them. This is the advice of St. Augustine, who said, speaking of venial sins, "Do not despise them because they are

little, but fear them because they are many. Though those to which I refer occur every day, they are nevertheless sinful, and they are not light because they are numerous, and it is because they are of daily occurrence and many in number, that the ruin of the multitude is to be feared," and behold also how great account our divine Saviour made of venial sin. St. Peter, as well as the other apostles except Judas, was free from grievous sin—"Vos mundi estis," and St. Peter refusing to allow his Master to wash his feet and thereby about to commit a venial sin which would lead to sins of greater magnitude, our Saviour said to him, "Si non laveris te non habebis partem mecum."

Resolve to watch and pray that you may not fall into temptation.

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## ON DEATH.

"In omnibus operibus tuis, memorare novissima tua et in æternum non peccabis."—ECCLES., vii, 40.

### 1. *What death is.*



THE Fifth Lesson in the funeral office, so often read by ecclesiastics, contains a brief summary of life and death. "Homo natus de muliere, brevi vivens tempore, repletur multis miseriis. Qui quasi flos egreditur et conteritur et fugit velut umbra et nunquam in eodem statu permanet." Behold the shortness of life—how vain, how fleeting, and how unhappy—and the end of it is death, which leads to another country, and opens the portals of eternity.

Death is the separation of soul and body, followed by the dissolution of the latter. It is a parting from the honours and distinctions—from the goods and riches of this world. The struggle of death does not last long, and it comes when it is least expected. After great pain and sickness, body and soul are separated, and the body deprived of everything, and abandoned by all, is left to the decay of the tomb and to return to its original dust.

Death makes a great change. It separates the rich ecclesiastic from his riches, leaving him nothing but the clay with which he is covered. It separates the proud ecclesiastic from his pride, for he cannot glory in the darkness and corruption of the tomb. It destroys all inordinate affection for this world, and for creatures, because it takes the ecclesiastic out of the changing scene, and places him like all other men before the Sovereign Judge, with nothing to follow him but his good or his evil works.

The priest above all other men is best able to realize in his mind the terrible circumstances of death, as he looks on this dreadful scene more frequently than others. He beholds the fearful and harrowing pain of the body. He witnesses the anguish and torment of the soul. He sees the evidence of contrition and sorrow for that past life which cannot be recalled, and the dreadful suspense and uncertainty about the future.

“If thou hast at any time seen a man die think that thou must also go the same way.” Think that the same sorrow and struggle await you. Imagine the pain and bitterness which will precede your death. Consider how your mind will be agitated for the past

and for the future, and endeavour in your life to realize what your death will be, and always to remember that thou shalt die.

## *2. On preparation for death.*

The best preparation for death is a virtuous life. The life of the just will end in the death of the just. The priest who is a man of prayer, who frequently offers up the Holy Sacrifice with great devotion, who cultivates his own soul, and never neglects the spiritual interests of the people, will never be abandoned by God at this terrible time of death when he so much needs the Divine assistance.

Consider, however, that it is most useful in the midst of your life of grace and virtue to have frequently before your mind the special thought of your death. The author of the Imitation says: "Blessed is he who has always the hour of his death before his eyes, and every day disposes himself to die," and the Scripture says that the remembrance of death is a great preventive to sin. "Remember thy last end and thou shalt never sin." Often reflect that death is the penalty and consequence of sin, and that "the wages of sin is death."

The ecclesiastic who looks for worldly distinction in the discharge of his duty, never considers that death will extinguish the distinctions and the honours of men. The priest who loves the applause of creatures and puts his happiness in it, forgets that death will quickly come and consign everything to oblivion. He who is devoted to the pleasures and amusements of this life, will seldom think upon the sad hour of his death, and will make little, if any

preparation for it. All whatsoever injures the soul instead of serving it, we must endeavour to put away, and to have our whole lives influenced and guided by the thought of that death which we cannot escape, and on which everything depends. Hence, the Annual and Monthly Retreats should be made so as to serve as a preparation for death. Frequent and long meditation on this important and useful subject will keep the thought of death before our minds. The most Holy Sacrifice ought to be frequently offered up to secure a good and happy death, and every death-bed, where we give the last consolations and behold the final struggles of the soul, will remind us in the most vivid manner of that scene, where we ourselves shall be the victim of death, and where after death comes the terrible judgment.

### 3. *The moment of death.*

For the good priest the moment of death is a moment of happiness. It relieves him from the evils of this life, and from the burdens of his ministry, and in the glorious society of heaven gives him that great reward which God has promised to those who instruct many unto justice; but to the unhappy priest who has not lived a good life, what is the moment of death to him? He looks back upon the past and everything afflicts him—the memory of those pleasures in which his heart delighted and from which he must now part for ever—the remembrance of the riches which he cannot carry with him into the grave—the recollection of those worldly friendships which must be broken for ever and which were maintained at the expense of virtue. Oh! how

bitter is the thought of death to the man who has lived in delights?

He will think how he came into the Church without any vocation, or having a vocation how he has despised the merciful graces of God. He will remember the many sacraments which he profaned—the many invitations of God which he neglected, the many instructions which he received, and to which he did not attend. Looking back, he will behold in his life no penance nor mortification, and in his heart no zeal for virtue or love for God. He will clearly see that the blood of Jesus Christ is made void for him, and that he was the man of sin and the abomination of desolation in the holy place. How will the souls, whom his neglect and his crimes have destroyed and sent down to hell, rise up against him and cry out for justice, and like Jerusalem, which was made the prey of its enemies, and which was surrounded by them on every side, so will his soul be encompassed and surrounded by the demons, who, because he is a priest, will clamour the more for their victim. Oh! even at that last dread moment, when all appears to be lost, let the angel of mercy come down from heaven and bring the dead to life.

Behold the past! and what will be the future? He cannot think of it. He dares not look the Almighty God in the face. How will he stand before the dread tribunal and give an account of his stewardship?

O Lord, let my soul die the death of the just, and let my last end be like to theirs! Let us not die as Cain did with despair heavy in his soul! Let us not die as Antiochus did, weeping and receiving no mercy. Let us not die as Judas did, with the memory of his

treason fresh upon his mind and overpowering it, but let our death be precious in the sight of God, and like the saints and just let us die in the Lord!

## ON PERSEVERANCE.

“Bonum certamen certavi; cursum consummavi; fidem servavi.”—2 TIM., iv, 7.

### 1. *What perseverance is.*



POHNER states perseverance to be a virtue which enables us to persevere in good to the end. Theologians, speaking on perseverance, make it two-fold, active and passive, the former denoting a faithful co-operation with the graces of God, and the latter signifying the departure of the soul while in this state of justice.

Active perseverance manifests itself in an eager desire to foresee and to avoid all danger, to use every means to strengthen the mind in good, to rise up from sin as soon as it has been committed, and to get rid of all attachment to this life, and all fear of death.

Passive perseverance is one of the greatest gifts of God. All other graces which are given to us by God are useless, as far as eternal life is concerned, if we have not this great grace. It is this which crowns all the rest. Let your life be filled with good works and be the manifestation of every virtue, and if in the end you have not this grace, everything is forgotten.

“Si averterit se justus a justitia, et fecerit iniqui-



tatem omnes justitiæ ejus quas fecerat, non recordabuntur," and again it is said, "Qui perseveraverit usque in finem hic salvus erit." Perseverance is like the last step in the ladder of heaven. It is the last stone which completes the edifice. It puts the seal to our election, and puts us in possession of the glorious rewards to come. St. Bernard says, "Without perseverance he who combats does not obtain the victory, nor does the victor obtain the prize. Take away perseverance and your obedience has no reward, your kindness has no favour, your fortitude has no praise." And hear the remarkable words which St. Bernardine uses when speaking of perseverance: "Perseverance," he says, "is the triumph of merit, the medium of recompense, the sister of patience, the daughter of constancy, the friend of peace, the knot of friendship, the bond of unity, and the road of sanctity."

Let the ecclesiastic reflect well on the inutility of being a Christian and of becoming a priest, of doing much good in the Church and of winning many souls to God, if he fight not the good fight and finish his course. What use will it be to him to have stood strong for a long time against the enemies of God and the Church, if in the end he fall down and become the servant of sin and the slave of the devil? What value will it have been to him to have been a tower of strength, and a teacher of justice, if his sins will in the end mar all his goodness, and if God thereby will not look upon the labours and virtues of his earlier life? There can be no value for eternal life in any virtue except in that which perseveres and receives its crown.

## 2. *The means of perseverance.*

One of the great means of perseverance is a faithful co-operation with the graces of God. If the ecclesiastic correspond with earnestness and fidelity with all the graces which God gives him during his life, God will never be wanting to him, but will bring to perfection the work which he has commenced in his soul. He will lead him by the hand from virtue to virtue until he gives him at death the final reward.

God brings the young ecclesiastic into the retirement and piety of college life. If he faithfully use this great grace given him by the mercy of God, his perseverance will not be endangered nor will his reward.

God separates the priest from all other men, giving him graces internal and external. A continual correspondence with all these will secure his success.

No ecclesiastic who leads a tepid or careless life, who rejects the grace of meditation which God offers him, or who is indifferent about it, who says Mass seldom and then with little devotion, who flies from the silence, the prayer, the retirement, the study of the sanctuary, can look forward with any kind of hope or confidence to his ultimate success. These are not the marks of the man who runs in the race and who receives the prize. This is not the fidelity even to death, which is rewarded by the crown of life.

The second great means of obtaining this great gift of perseverance is prayer—fervent, humble, and continual. It is in this way that St. Augustine says that perseverance can be merited: “Hoc Dei donum suppliciter emereri potest.” God will not turn away his

face from the continual cry of prayer. If the priest ask every day for the perfect discharge of his duty, for fidelity in little things, for a faithful and undivided love of God, and above all and more than all for perseverance in good, God will rain down grace and mercy upon his soul, he will give him all the encouragement and assistance which his life of labour and conflict requires, and when the end comes, when the Church shall mourn the loss of her servant, and when the people shall bewail the good priest whose ministrations they will no longer enjoy, God will take him to himself, and will bestow upon him his rich reward.

In the prayer of the Psalmist cry out for the great gift of perseverance.

“In te Domine speravi, non confundar in æternum in justitia tua libera me et eripe me.

“Inclina ad me aurem tuam et salva me.

“Esto mihi in Deum protectorem et in locum munitionis ut salvum me facias.

“Quoniam firmamentum et refugium meum es tu.

“Deus docuisti me a juventute mea et usque nunc pronuntiabo mirabilia tua.

“Et usque in senectam et senium, Deus ne derelinquas me.”

FINIS.









